# *The* Mouse Miller

## AND OTHER STORIES

*By* COOKE DON CARLOS

Author of "Virginia's Inheritance"

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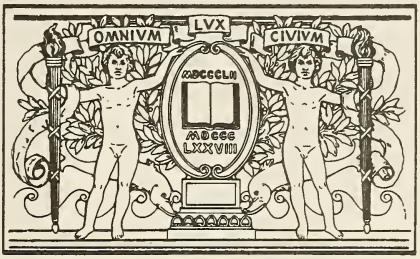

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## I

### THE BAKER OF COBLENTZ

ONE Christmas Eve, the glow of the setting sun reddened the spires and domes of Coblentz and lit up a little window set in the upper half of Baker Gottlieb's door as he looked out on the narrow, snowy street. It was lined with ugly little shops like his, with two or three tall old houses with quaint overhanging eaves and high chimney-pots, the only exception to the general shabbiness being the mansion of the Herr Professor at the corner, a handsome house set well back in its high-walled garden, as if it shrank from the poverty about it, though its master owned most of the buildings in sight.

As the sunlight faded from the street, a last beam lingered over the great house at the corner.

"Like a glow from the comfort within," sighed poor Gottlieb, with envy in his heart, for his flour bin stood nearly empty, the few pfennigs brought in by the day's baking would barely eke out the rent due on the morrow, and the one loaf left on his counter would be his only Christmas feast.

Gottlieb was turning toward the end of his shop where the oven stood when the door opened and two women came in, — the Herr Professor's housekeeper, a buxom young female, following a ragged, aged dame who produced three bent and blackened coins and quaveringly asked for a loaf.

"Nay, mother, I have but one loaf for my own needs," answered the baker kindly. "Besides, flour has risen in price, and it takes ten pfennigs instead of three to buy a loaf."

The housekeeper broke in briskly:

"My good man, I must have that loaf. There are guests at the Herr Professor's, and I need bread for croutons." And she fumbled in an ample purse hanging at her side with her keys.

"Nay, mistress, I must eat, as well as your master's guests, and this loaf is all I have for my Christmas dinner."

"Then you shall have thirty pfennigs," cried she good-naturedly. "Only haste, Master Gottlieb, for my supper waits!"

As Gottlieb extended the loaf, the old dame exclaimed:

"Alas, I must perish! for I am too weak and old to go farther. Other shops are sold out, and I have had naught to eat since yesterday!" And she turned away, still gazing with longing eyes at the one loaf.

Under Gottlieb's ragged apron beat a kind heart, and thrusting the loaf into her hands, he bade her begone and keep her pfennigs for Christmas. So, mumbling thanks, she shuffled away, leaving the housekeeper shaking her fist at poor Gottlieb.

"What?" she screamed. "You insult me, housekeeper of the Herr Professor? Refuse thirty pfennigs and give the loaf away? Oh, you shall dearly rue this, Master Gottlieb! There will be no bakeshop here next rent day. My brother is the Herr Professor's agent!" And she flounced out, banging the door behind her.

After a bite to eat, the baker lit a candle and sat a long time staring into the embers of his oven fire, and when the room was cold and the

candle burned out, he went sadly to bed, feeling that disaster had indeed come upon him.

In the Christmas dawning, a loud knocking at his door awakened him. Opening it, he found his friend Hans, the shoemaker from across the way.

"A Merry Christmas!" cried he. "See, my good daughter has come in from the country with gifts which I share with thee. Here are eggs, milk, butter, and dried grapes. And now haste you and make a Christmas pudding, for I must be back over ere my coffee cools." And the jolly shoemaker was across the street while Gottlieb was trying to thank him.

"God is good!" thought Gottlieb, "and now I can bake kuchen and sell them, and that, at least, will buy my Christmas dinner, even if I must pack from here to-morrow."

As he was whistling over his dough, the agent came for the rent. "On Christmas day, too!" thought the poor baker, as he counted it out from a broken mug. "Surely, the Herr Professor is a hard man."

The agent laughed. He was stout, with a wart on his nose, and wore a blue coat.

"His agent is, baker," he growled. "You

are to be out of this to-morrow. I shall let the shop to a bookseller, baker. The Herr Professor will be pleased!"

Gottlieb tried to plead for time, but the agent would not stay to listen, and taking up his tall staff, he went out, still repeating, "The change will much please the Herr Professor. Baker, the Herr Professor will be much pleased!"

As Gottlieb began his baking, he comforted himself with the thought that perhaps he could go as cook's helper at some inn or bakery, and surely his friend, the cobbler, could lodge him for a time.

When the cakes were made, he set them, very plump and tempting, on his tray, and, donning his worn cloak, went out in the snowy morning.

People were hurrying to church, the bells were all ringing, and every one cried "Merry Christmas" but poor Gottlieb.

By dinner time he had sold but half his cakes, and he gladly took an innkeeper's offer to give him a meal for the rest. And after dining well in the servants' hall, he went away with such broken food as was given him, and a much lighter heart.

As he passed down an alley way, the wretched outcasts came out of their hovels to beg, but seeing his poor clothes, they did not stop him, and he hurried on until he came to one hovel more wretched than the rest. It was hardly more than a heap of stones, with no door save a gaping hole in its toppling walls. Inside, Gottlieb saw the old woman who had been in his shop yesterday. She was crouched on the earthen floor, wrapped in rags, and only moaned when he called "Merry Christmas!"

Gottlieb went up to her. "What did you buy with your three pfennigs, mother?"

"They stole my loaf and the coins, and I starve and freeze on Christmas Day!" And she fell to moaning again.

"At least you shall not freeze," cried Gottlieb, and he ran to a corner shop to buy fuel, and soon had a fire blazing in her cracked iron brazier, and his own poor coat hung over the doorway.

Then the dame, who had neither moved nor spoken, arose and shook off her rags. She grew straight and tall, a white robe floated about her, and her face was beautiful and bright, for on her forehead gleamed a star

which shone so brightly that Gottlieb must shade his eyes.

Then she smiled on him and said, in a voice like the sweetest music:

"I am the Christmas Fairy, born when Bethlehem's star first rose. I shall never die nor the star's light cease to shine as long as men love and are merciful. You have given all that you have, and my reward is three wishes; but remember, wealth, fame, nor power can give happiness, nor plenty a contented heart." And so saying, she laid a sprig of fir-tree in his hand and vanished.

Gottlieb looked around the empty firelit hut and rubbed his eyes. Could he be dreaming? No; there burned the fire he had kindled, there lay the old crone's rags, and in his hand was the fir sprig. He sniffed its spicy fragrance as he went from the alley way into the street, passing the Herr Professor's house.

The street was dark, save for the pale gleam of the starlight; but lights shone here and there behind holly-wreathed lattices, and the Herr Professor's house was all aglow with warmth and welcome, for the counsellor would sup there to-night. Servants hurried to and fro with

steaming platters, and the Herr Professor and his family stood at the great open door to welcome the great guest.

"Ah," sighed Gottlieb as he passed, "if I were the Herr Professor, how happy I should be!" Then he felt his form grow stout and robust, his hair curly and long. In the twinkling of an eye, the gift of the Christmas Fairy had worked, and he, Gottlieb, was the Herr Professor, and his tall, thin wife was bowing, too, and his children clapped their hands and chorused shrilly, "You are welcome, Herr Professor!"

The great counsellor walked proudly into the velvet-hung room, and when he had been unrolled from his many fur wraps and shawls, and the housekeeper, now very meek and attentive, had carried them away, they went in to the table, all set out in fine array with all manner of good things, and a man servant to help the housekeeper serve them.

But the supper was a failure. The counsellor felt it a condescension that he should dine with a plain professor, and showed this by his patronizing ways and the rude manner in which he contradicted his host. Gottlieb, the professor,

was wretched, — vexed that his gold plate had not been put on the table, envious that his old schoolmate should be so high above him in rank, and furious at his sneering manner.

"As if I, a Breneke, was not as good as a Schollenbergh!" he fumed to himself. "Why should he be counsellor and I only a professor? Oh, I wish I were he! I should — "

But before he could think another thought, Gottlieb felt his jaws grow long, his body lean, his head rather bald, his good stuff coat changed to velvet, and — he was seated in the counsellor's chair, Counsellor Schollenbergh himself!

"The wine was bad," he thought, "and the heavy pastry gave me stomach-ache. How stupid are these Brenekes! Why did I ever come to sup with such inferior persons?" And the counsellor arose and said haughtily that he wished his carriage called, as he desired to take leave of them. "Matters of state, good Herr Professor; I must away." And he was speedily stalking out to his carriage, after a cold farewell which left the poor Herr Professor very sore at heart.

Yet as he wrapped himself warmly and settled back into the handsome coach, the counsellor sighed. He thought of his own great, cold,

mansion, where no little children welcomed the Christ-child's birthday; of his baby's name carved on his family tomb, and of his fair, proud wife who cared only for his wealth and name, and was now dancing, with no thought of him, you may be sure, at the count's ball. Tears of loneliness wet the counsellor's eyes as he gazed out on the dark street, and by the light from the cobbler's window he read, above a tiny shop-door, "Gottlieb the Baker," and said aloud, "Ah, within there sleeps an honest fellow, with not a worry or a care, no doubt. I wish I were as care-free as Gottlieb the baker, — nay, I wish I were he!"

Bang — bang! Pound — pound! Pushing his yellow nightcap back, Gottlieb sat up in bed. It was the morning after Christmas, and as the gray light came through the frosted window at which he stared, he finally decided that the noise of pounding came from his shop door below.

Running down in his shirt, he found Hans the cobbler lifting a great bundle from the step. Beside it lay a branch of fir, which Gottlieb picked up ere he closed the door on Hans, who laid the bundle on the counter and laughed at the baker's dress.

"Run for your trousers, man," he cried, "you are still asleep! This bundle is yours, left by the Herr Professor's housekeeper an hour ago. And as you did not open your door, I was afraid of thievery and waked you."

By the time Gottlieb was dressed, the cobbler had made up a roaring fire, and together they opened the parcel. It contained a warm cloak, a box of sweets, a stuffed goose from Strasburg, a goodly leather purse with five silver thalers therein, and a letter sealed with a red wafer and addressed to "Master Gottlieb the Baker." And this was the letter:

> "MASTER GOTTLIEB:
>
> "My housekeeper was angry on Christmas Eve, but in proof that she repents, sends the goose, and begs that you continue in your shop, serving my household. My family join me in the other gifts. Your act of charity has taught us a lesson in the spirit of Christmas giving, and at your unselfish conduct we are most edified and pleased.
>
> "GUSTAVE BRENEKE."

When Hans had been told the story of the two women (though Gottlieb said no word of his later meeting with the old dame), he shook

hands heartily and said, "That is well, friend Gottlieb," and went away, after accepting an invitation to dine off the goose that very evening.

Once alone, Gottlieb stood looking at the gifts, and turning the sprig of fir in his hands, said:

"I wonder did I dream it all, — what part of my Christmas day was real, and what part a dream. Here is the fir branch the Christmas Fairy gave me, and I am sure I had those three wishes."

Smiling gently, with a great peace in his heart, he set about preparing the goose for the oven, and as it began to send up a savory smell, he laid the fir branch on the fire and, still shaking his head dubiously, said:

"At least part of it is real, for, as the agent said, the Herr Professor was pleased."

## II

### A DAUGHTER OF THE STARS

LONG ago a young hunter said to his mother, "I will go and hunt for buffalo." But she answered, "It is far to go, and evil may befall you! Tarry a little, my son."

So he laid away his bow and spear and stayed at her bidding. That was in winter; but when the spring rains had washed the earth clean and bright and carpeted the prairie with flowers, again he took his weapons, and, resisting all pleading, he went away from his village just as the sun rose.

The prairie grass was sweet and cool to his feet; the larks were calling cheerily, and his heart was very happy; and he went on, miles and miles away from home, until the sun told him it was noon; so he stopped at a spring to eat the parched corn his mother had given him. Bending to drink, he saw a leaf floating on the water, and on it a wounded cricket. It

chirped feebly, and the young hunter cried, "No, little brother, you shall not drown!" and took him out of the water.

Resting on a grass blade, the grateful insect shrilled its thanks, and said:

"Across the prairie is a purple hill. On this hillside you will find something worth seeking; but take care to keep what first comes to you, for if you do not, you will mourn all your life."

The young hunter laughed at the thought of finding something on the hillside and mourning all his life; yet he promised to be careful, and went on his way.

Although he walked far, he found nothing. At last, tired and hungry, he decided to go home, yet, knowing how the villagers would laugh if he returned empty-handed, thought to hunt a little longer. So, though the sun was down and the stars were out, he persevered, until in the distance he saw a purple hill outlined against the dying fire of the sunset.

Remembering the cricket's promise, he hastened on, and just as twilight faded into night, he discerned, among the trees upon the hillside, a globe of light, and heard delicious music.

Down, down the dazzling ball floated to the

foot of the hill, and he saw that it was a great golden basket, out of which sprang twelve lovely maidens in gossamer robes like moonlight. Joining hands, their music swelled into a song, to which they danced in and out among the trees, while fireflies flitted through the dusk and the starlight fell soft and pale over the prairie.

In vain he called to them; they did not heed, but wove in and out in their graceful dance, singing sweetly. Their long, dark hair hung over their glittering robes like dusky mantles, and their faces were like lilies and roses, save one who moved more lightly than the rest. Her face was like a pearl, her eyes two sapphires darkly blue, and her hair fell in a shower of gold to her feet.

Of all the beautiful ones, this one seemed the brightest, and the hunter followed them, vainly endeavoring to stay her, though she moved on softly as a cloud.

But at last the dancing feet paused, the song died away into a sweet refrain. With beating heart and panting breath, the young hunter came near and stretched out eager hands towards the brightest one; but she glided away, leaving in her stead one of the darker beauties. Then,

forgetful of the cricket's warning, he released her and sprang forward with a cry, clasping the maiden he desired. Her bright hair sweeping over him obscured his sight for a moment, but he heard a plaintive minor chord, which died away in the distance, and when he could see, the dancers were fled, leaving the golden-haired maiden alone with him.

There in the starlight he wooed her. But she told him she was not of his kind and that it would not be well for him to take her for wife. But he would not have no for answer, and when she refused him, wept, and said she would go with him. Then he kissed her, and she took his hand and went back with him to his people. So the hunter did not return from his hunt empty-handed.

The village people marveled at her beauty and did homage to her. But in private his mother wept, saying, "He has wed a daughter of the stars, and he cannot be happy."

But the star maiden, though she did not mingle with the people nor join in the work of the women, seemed to love her husband very much. And at night, when the village slept and the fires were low, she would sit out upon the prairie

with his head on her lap and sing him songs of the sky, or tell tales of her beautiful home beyond the seven golden mountains, across the seven golden bridges, in the land of the seven golden fountains; and it seemed to the young hunter that he was the happiest man in all the world.

Autumn came; the flowers faded, the grass grew sear upon the prairie, and the men of the village said, "Come, it is time for the fall hunt."

So, sorrowfully he bade his beautiful wife good-by and set off for the hunting-ground. When night was come and the village all asleep, the hunter's mother was awakened by a soft sighing, and, looking up, saw that her son's wife stood at the tepee door with her hand stretched up to the stars. And when the mother asked why the young wife sighed, she answered, "O mother dear, I long for home." Then she began a sad, sweet song that made the tears stand in the old mother's eyes; but its music soon lulled her to sleep, and when she awoke it was morning, and the young wife was gone. But by and by she came with her robe full of rushes and her feet all wet with dew, for she had walked far

over the sear grass to a little pond where they grew.

When the hunter's mother asked what she did with the rushes, she answered, "I shall weave a basket," and she sat all day weaving and weaving; but though the basket grew under her skilful fingers, night came and it was not finished.

And that night she sighed as before and said, "Mother dear, I long for home." And in the morning she was gone, but presently came again with more rushes, and sat to weave as before; and when the old mother said, "Daughter, you weave a great basket," she answered, "Not greater than my need, mother," and worked away until nightfall, when it was finished.

"How pleased your husband will be, daughter, at the fine basket you have woven, when he comes on the morrow!" But the son's wife answered, "Nay, he will like it not," and fell to sighing in the night as before, and answered the mother's questionings with "Ah, mother dear, I long for home!"

Then she sang a sad, sweet strain in her own language. "Why, it is as if it were farewell!" cried the mother; but her eyes grew heavy,

and when she awoke, her daughter was gone, and the great basket, too.

When noon had come and the wife did not return, she was afraid, and when at night her son, laden with game, entered the village with the rest of the hunters amid the shouts of the people, he cried, "Mother, where is my wife?"

The mother wept and could not tell him.

All night the people of the village searched and called, all night their torches lit the prairie, but no trace of the beautiful wife could they find; and at last, worn and spent, the young hunter staggered into his mother's tepee at daybreak and fell asleep on a mat before the fire, and in a dream he thought his wife came to him and kissed him, that her golden hair swept over his breast and her tears fell upon his face. Then a plaintive minor chord sounded through the tepee, and he awoke.

On his cheek was a drop of water like a splash of rain, and upon his breast lay one long golden hair; but his bride was not there. Days went by, but she did not return, and finally the young hunter made a long journey to a wise woman who, when she heard his story, shook her head

and said, as had his mother, "You wedded a daughter of the stars and you could not be happy, for she could never be satisfied with earth life, and longed for home. So she made a basket of rushes secretly, and by help of a charm ascended to her father."

Weeping bitterly, the hunter went away over the dreary prairie. The snow fell fast and the cold winds wailed about him.

On, on he went, not knowing whither, until in the chill dusk of a winter's twilight, he saw in the distance the purple hill where he had wooed his star maiden.

In vain hope of her return, he tried to reach it, but, weary and spent with sorrow, his limbs refused to carry him farther, and he sank down as the night closed over the prairie and fell asleep. Then the soft snow covered him with its white blanket and he never woke again.

Years have gone, and the people of the young hunter have vanished like the daughter of the stars, but the springtime still brings the flowers to deck the prairie and the fireflies still flit at evening among the trees on the purple hill, and if you will walk there in the gathering twilight, you will hear the plaintive call sounding from the

hillside. Sweet, low, and sad it rings out, never changing its mournful cadence.

They say it is a night bird which sings there when daylight is fading, but it is the spirit of the young hunter calling to the daughter of the stars.

## III

### THE BROOM MASTER

THERE was one time an old man who had three sons, and the two eldest were bold, bright lads of whom he was proud; but the youngest was so dull a lout that they called him "Dumbling," and he must always sit at the lowest place at table and wait on all the others. He wore ragged clothes and fared hardly until it came time for his father to die.

Then the father said to the eldest son, "I give thee the roan horse, the house and all therein. Keep it!"

To the second he said, "I give thee the gray mare and the little field with all therein. Till it!"

And to poor Dumbling he said: "Thou art good for nothing save to be a scullion; so take the old broom behind the door!"

For many days after the funeral, the elder brothers spent all their money in carousing,

and the house stood cluttered and unattended; and the little field lay untilled and unwatered. Only the hearth fire burned brightly, for Dumbling brought in wood and swept the hearth clean from day to day.

When the money was all gone and the cellar empty of meat and drink, the elder brothers rode away, telling Dumbling he could stay and starve.

When he had eaten his last crust, poor Dumbling bethought him that he must now fare forth into the wide, wide world and seek his fortune. But as he turned from the cold hearth to go, the house lay all dusty and cluttered before him; so he took the old broom from behind the door and set the house to rights, sweeping it clean. Then lo! from where I cannot tell you, he swept up a rusty brown leather knapsack.

"Come," said he, "I'll not go forth empty-handed." So he swung it over his shoulder, took his broom in hand, and set out.

But as he passed the little field, he thought: "Father said 'till it'; so dig I must." And he set to work with such a good will that by evening he had spaded it. Then he stopped to rest by a scarecrow that had been set up to

frighten the birds. About this straw man hung an old cloak of faded green.

"Come," said Dumbling, "thou art better clad than I." And he put the cloak across his own shoulders and set out to seek his fortune just as the sun went down. He walked and walked for a long time, until the stars spangled the dark sky and the owls began to hoot in a large wood to which he now came.

Seeing no other path but that which entered the forest, Dumbling pressed on, and suddenly heard a loud quarreling and shouting of rough voices from behind a clump of bushes. Peeping through them, he saw by a smoldering fire three robbers, with long mustaches, and with fierce pistols in their belts and broadswords at their sides, engaged in a wrangle over a bag of gold.

Running suddenly among them, Dumbling seized the money and was gone like a flash; and when he had run a milè or so, he marveled to find that he was not pursued. But you must know that the green cloak from the scarecrow's back was one that rendered its wearer invisible, and though the robbers saw their booty disappear, they each accused the other, not being able to see Dumbling at all.

When Dumbling had walked a great distance, it began to grow so dark that he had to feel his way until he saw a faint light, which he found came from a little hut with a candle in its window.

Knocking at the door, it was opened by a ragged old woman who peered out, much frightened to hear a voice so near and see nothing. For a while Dumbling enjoyed her dismay; then he entered, closed the door behind him with a bang, and removed the green cloak, when the dame saw a poorly clad lad with tousled hair, and an old broom in his hand.

Then she cried out that he must depart at once, as she was the servant of three bloody robbers, who would murder them both if they should come home.

"Well, I only ask a bite and a sup and a sleep by the fire," said Dumbling. But she wept and wrung her hands, saying her throat would surely be cut, and that there was not even a moldy crust in the cupboard.

"Alas," said Dumbling, "I have worked and traveled fasting for a day. How I wish this old knapsack held a capon and a pottle of good wine therein!" And he pulled at the rusty buckles until it flew open. And there,

indeed, was a lusty, smoking capon and an earthen pottle of fine wine, with a long, crusty loaf, for this knapsack was enchanted, and its owner would never want food.

You may be sure they dined well, and then, when the dame had fallen asleep by the fire, Dumbling took up his broom to clean the hearth, when he swept up — from where, I cannot tell you — an old pair of leather top-boots.

Just then a great hullabaloo arose outside. It was the robbers returning, and their horses' feet were tramping nearer and nearer, when the old woman awoke with a cry of "Fly!" and, seeing the boots, she told Dumbling that none could hear or catch their wearer, as they were the seven-league boots of silence. So, pulling them on and taking up his luggage, Dumbling stepped swiftly and invisibly out the door as the robbers entered, and was far away from there in a jiffy, I can tell you!

And by midnight he had come to a large city which was all illuminated, and where bells were all ringing, though the citizens who crowded the streets wore mourning and seemed sorrowful.

Doffing the invisible cloak, Dumbling stopped before the door of a handsome mansion, in whose

portico sat an old man in a ragged black cloak, looking sadly out at the lights. And in reply to a salutation, he answered civilly enough, and noting the lad's strange burden, — the knapsack, the boots, the bag of gold, great cloak, and old birch broom, — he asked him whither he went and what he did for a living.

"Why, as for the first, honored master," answered Dumbling, "anywhere! And for a vocation, I may say I am a broom master, for this birch broom and these things you see upon me are all I am master of in this world."

After some talk, the two struck a bargain. Dumbling should serve in the old man's house for a penny a day. And before they went to rest, his master told him the reason for the illumination of the city, and why he, the owner of so fine a mansion, must be served by a strange lad at a penny a day.

The king of that city had a daughter fairer than moonlight, but more black-hearted than midnight, for she was a wicked witch and would marry no one of her many suitors who could not make her shiver. And this none could do, for she had a heart of ice, and many a prince, noble and gentle, had failed in this endeavor and had

had his head cut off and hung on the garden wall to scare the birds away.

Dumbling's master had seven sons, all of whom tried to make the princess shiver, and all of whom now lay headless in the churchyard, while the poor father had vainly spent his vast fortune in the king's courts trying to save them. But no unsuccessful suitor lived, for the law was, "He who fails dies."

And now the son of a great king had sent heralds to declare his intent to win the lovely princess, and so the town was all ablaze with rockets and strings of lanterns in honor of his coming.

For some days after his arrival in the city, Dumbling pondered on all this as he moved about the mansion, serving his master faithfully for a penny a day, though he often eked out the scanty board with food from his enchanted knapsack. The poor master, however, never noticed this, so sad was he at his great losses.

Soon the king's son came with a great retinue, and fell into ecstasy over the beauty of the princess. But he fared no better than all the rest, and his head would certainly have graced the wall had not his faithful followers rallied around

him, fought a fierce fight with the king's soldiers, and, having slaughtered many and burned part of the town, marched away vowing vengeance.

Now was the poor old king more anxious than ever to wed his daughter, for, with a great war threatening, he knew he must secure a rich and powerful ally in the shape of a son-in-law. So he redoubled his efforts, even sending the princess riding through all the countryside on a milk-white, silver-trappinged palfrey, with forty noble maidens in her train, that all might see her beauty.

So it was that Dumbling, the broom master, saw her from his high balcony as he shook out a dusty tapestry. He marveled at her long, golden hair falling across her horse's flanks, and her rose-leaf face, like some rare flower, smiling at the shouting people; for, though she had bereaved half the city by her wickedness, they could but worship her beauty. She, looking up on the balcony, saw only a rosy-cheeked serving man waving a tapestry, and smiled up at him, as she did on all men. That smile won the broom master's heart, and he thereafter could think of nothing but the princess, and he finally went to his master, asking a holiday,

that he might go and win the princess for his wife.

"Alas, my poor servant," cried his master, "have you lost your wits?" And he told again the long list of gentles and nobles whose heads hung on the garden wall. But go Dumbling would and must.

"Well, then," said the master, "if it must be, go sweep the courtyard yet once more, and tell me what you find there."

So the broom master swept the flagging clean, and lo! he turned up — I cannot tell you from where — a great stone; whereupon up gushed a fountain, colder than the mountain snows and sparkling with hundreds of tiny gold and silver fishes, a lovely sight in the morning sunlight.

"Take thou this cask," said Dumbling's master, "and fill it. My sons, scorning my advice, would have none of it; but it may save your head."

Wondering, but obedient, the broom master set his cask, the cloak, boots, and broom into a donkey cart and drove away.

As he passed down the street, neighbors said, "Whither away, broom master?" And when

he answered, "To wed the king's daughter," they laughed, yet were sorry, too. For all liked Dumbling, and one cried: " They'll never let you in with those rags! Come, I'll lend you my coat."

"If clothes be needed, neighbor," answered the broom master, "I can soon provide for that." And thanking him, Dumbling drove the little gray donkey to the king's own tailor, and, taking out the bag of robbers' gold, soon had a suit of handsome velvet all overlaid with silver, a hat with a long, long plume, and stockings of silk above his gold-buckled shoes. Then to the king's own barber clattered the cart, and when, towards evening, his toilet was completed, the broom master came forth as curled and perfumed an exquisite as ever took the palace stairs.

When he arrived in the palace yard, he threw his reins to an astonished groom, and bade the porter carefully to carry up the cask to the king. But as it was wrapped in the green cloak, the fellow marveled at this strange, handsome fellow who gave him a burden that he could not see.

His Majesty gave a willing audience to this

new suitor, not dismayed by his queer equipage or the old boots and broom tucked away under his arm; for wooers of the princess had come in strange guise. He also consented to the broom master's demand that the princess must not know of his coming, and that he must see her asleep.

These arrangements made, the two sat down to supper, and afterwards drank their wine and talked of this and that until the palace bells rang midnight, and the king gave the order that the broom master be shown into the garden where the princess slept in summer.

The broom master, with the cask, broom, boots, and cloak in one great bundle on his back, followed a page through the silent palace out into the silent rose perfumed garden.

Here the loveliest princess in all the world slept on a bed of white satin upon a marble portico overlooking the lake, and her ladies, wearied by the heat of the midsummer night, slept also upon cushions on the steps below her, instead of watching, as was their duty.

The broom master's heart gave a leap as he saw her, so fair, asleep in the starlight. He wrapped his cloak about him, donned the seven-

league boots of silence, and, walking softly to her couch, turned out the cask of icy water, which, being under enchantment, had but grown the colder as it stood.

Ugh! The icy shower drenched her lacy robe and wet her through and through, the tiny fishes splashed and wriggled coldly all about her, and, waking with a cry, "I shiver! Oh, I shiver!" she saw that she was conquered at last.

Then, with a loud scream of rage, she turned herself into a great black eagle and flew out of the garden away across the prairies. But the seven-league boots could fly, too. So after her sped the broom master, flogging her with the birchen broom, until she was glad to alight in a forest and turn herself into a roaring lion; but the broom master belabored her so hard she was forced to take to the air again, this time turning into a lovely white swan; and he, following in her wake, flogged and flogged until the blood stained her white feathers, and she was forced to turn again toward the palace garden. And just at daybreak, with drooping pinions and plaintive cries, she flew over the garden wall and, dropping her swan form, fell at the broom master's feet.

Then the golden sun rose over the fair garden, where all the sweet flowers stretched their little lovely faces up to smile at him, and all the birds woke to chant his praise.

Then the sleeping ladies woke, too, to see their mistress, all draggled and disheveled, seated on her couch by the side of a handsome lad, who was kissing her as if he never meant to stop and vowing to make her a kind and loving husband.

This he did, for the next day they were wed amidst great rejoicing, and the broom master and the king's daughter lived happily forever after.

## IV

### ROSE-MARIE AND THE WITCH O' WOODS

#### I

A LONG time ago, in a village at the edge of the Harz mountains, lived a stone-cutter and his wife, with their children, Eldwald and Rose-Marie.

The children were left much alone at home in the little stone cot on the outskirts of the town, for their father was away all day at the quarry, and their mother sewed at the burgomaster's house almost all the year round, leaving them each morning when breakfast was over. After setting out their luncheon of black bread and cheese, she would kiss them and say:

"Eat when you are hungry, my children, and *do not go near the woods.*"

Now, there were no fearful beasts or poisonous snakes in the wood. It was a lovely place, with long aisles of green trees carpeted with moss, where all manner of pretty, harmless, woodland

creatures loved to play, and all manner of bright flowers and berries grew among the tall ferns and brambles.

Lovers walked the wood unafraid, and the elders of the village were wont to stroll about its edge on sunny Sabbath afternoons.

But still the sweet, green wood held danger for the little ones, and many a home had been bereft because of it. For in the very heart of the wood lived a wicked witch, sometimes seen in the dark, flitting here and there like a shadow. They called her the "Witch o' Woods," and more than one brave hunter kept a silver bullet in his box for her. For you must know that only a *silver* bullet will kill a witch. And though no one had ever been close enough to get a shot at the dreadful creature, the whole village hated and feared her, with just cause, as you shall see.

Whenever a child who was disobedient or naughty strayed into the wood, she changed it into a pretty little rabbit, and hippety-hop it went through a little tunnel which led straight into her den. And as the years went by and every now and then a child would disappear, the villagers would cry, "The Witch o' Woods!" In

time there came to be a song about it, which mothers sang to their babies to a sad, sad tune:

"Stay out of the wood
If you know what's good."

This song Rose-Marie knew well, as she did the story of the witch, and she never ventured across the great green meadow lying between their house and the wood, where the geese fed and squawked all day, and where she sometimes must venture for her mother's five geese when Fritz, the gooseherd, who was old and forgetful, failed to drive them home.

One bright summer morning, Rose-Marie and Eldwald played in front of their home, and all at once a great butterfly flew over their heads, with wings of purple and gold. For a moment it hovered above them, and then settled on a rose-bush not far away. With a cry of joy, Eldwald ran toward it, but it sailed in circles just above his reach, leading him out across the meadow toward the wood.

Despite Rose-Marie's cries, the boy followed it, and though she ran after him as fast as she could, she reached the edge of the wood to see

the bit of purple and gold flitting far down its dim aisles, with Eldwald running after it.

Poor Rose-Marie called and searched for him vainly for some hours, and when it was noon and he had not returned, she hurried to the village and sobbingly broke the news to her mother.

Soon the stone-cutter and a crowd of his neighbors were searching the underbrush of the forest. But though they searched until sunset, and all night torches flared among the trees, no trace of the lost boy could they find.

Now all was changed in Rose-Marie's home. The mother sat all day at the window gazing with tear-stained eyes at the wood that had swallowed up her child. The father came and went, white and silent, and poor Rose-Marie's little heart ached and ached for their sorrow, and grieved over her lost playmate. Night after night, she lay awake on her little bed in the loft, thinking of Eldwald and trying to plan some way to find her brother; for she would not believe, as did many of the villagers, that Eldwald was dead, but felt sure that the Witch o' Woods had turned him into a rabbit, and that he was a prisoner far within the heart of the forest.

As she lay one night watching the stars through

her open window, the night wind whispered among the leaves of the vine which wreathed it, and the moon, rising like a great golden shield over the tower of the church, seemed to smile down upon her. A nightingale trilled faintly from the wood.

It was as if some far-away voice called her, and springing up, she slipped on her gown, and, taking her shoes in her hand, stole softly down the ladder and across the stone floor of the kitchen. She could hear her parents' heavy breathing from the cupboard bed in the corner, and trembled as she took down her father's knapsack from behind the door, and in the darkness felt for bread and cheese on the shelf nearby. Putting these, with a cup, into the knapsack, she opened the door carefully and stole out into the moonlight.

The flowers slept, drenched in dew, faintly sweet about her. The trees stirred in the soft air, and a bird twittered drowsily in its dream. Far away, a dog barked and an owl hooted. The crickets chirped so loudly in the grasses as she passed that her heart stood still for fear they should waken her mother. They seemed to say, "Whist, whist! Rose-Marie runs away!" And

in the meadow pond the frogs took up the cry: "Croak, croak! Rose-Marie runs away!"

Eldwald's pet cock stirred in his sleep and cried shrill and high, "Cock-a-doodle-doo! Rose-Marie runs away!" And this woke the doves in the house eaves, who murmured peevishly, "Coo-hoo! Who runs away?"

Yet, despite all these alarums, little Rose-Marie ran swiftly on across the meadow, and at last came to the edge of the wood. Turning to look back at the little stone house sleeping so peacefully in the moonlight, the tears stood in her eyes, and stretching her hands out to it, poor Rose-Marie cried, "O, good-by, dear home! Good-by! Good-by!" And thus saying, she pushed on into the darkness of the wood.

## II

On and on went Rose-Marie, over moss and fern, stopping now and then in the darkness to loosen a bramble from her gown. But save for a stumble and a lash from some low-hanging bough, nothing happened to frighten her.

At last, as her feet began to falter, it seemed as if tiny lights gleamed here and there through the thickets, and when she sank at length upon

a mossy knoll at the foot of a great oak-tree, a faint humming came to her ears, like the far-away singing of gnats, and finally, as she was dropping asleep, the sound seemed to change into a kind of chant.

"See, oh, see,
On every tree,
What lamps are shining (ting, ting, ting).
They are eyes
Of fireflies,
To light your wandering (ting, ting, ting).
And sweetly sleep, dear Rose-Marie,
We watch will keep, and guard o'er thee;
And ne'er a danger cometh nigh
When fairies chant a lullaby."

And so, to the chime of faint fairy bells, Rose-Marie fell softly asleep and dreamed of little Eldwald and their home.

When she awoke, the sun was high, though but few of his rays could pierce the green gloom about her. At her side lay a large leaf heaped high with bright berries. Springing up, she vainly sought for the giver of this gift, but heard nothing save the trickling of a tiny rill nearby, and saw nothing but a flash of crimson as a redbird flew before her.

After a little prayer of thankfulness, she ran to wash her face in the little stream, and ate a hearty breakfast from her store of food, finishing with the fairies' berries, for she decided it must be those little people who had gathered them, for fairies always stand ready to help good children, and when once you start to do a good thing, though it seems hard, hundreds of little helpers spring up unseen on every side to aid the task.

Cheered and refreshed, Rose-Marie went on her way until, at evening she came to a barren, rocky opening in the woods. Through the trees, a long red beam of light seemed pointing like a fiery finger at a dark pool which lay there, dull and slimy, amid blasted trees and withered rushes, which seemed to shrink back from the dead, dark water.

High above it towered a cliff, rough with bolders and dark with dusky pine, and at its base, just beyond the margin of the pool, she could see a dark opening, or cave, which seemed very narrow and deep.

It was a sad place at all times; but to a little girl alone at nightfall, it seemed a frightful place. As she paused, shivering, a chant of tiny voices buzzed in her ear:

"Now human love
Must dare and fare
Where fairies fear to tread."

Darkness fell suddenly, strange noises sounded about her, and from the cave in the cliff came a faint whimpering sound like the noise of many little animals crying weakly. With a sinking heart, Rose-Marie knew that this place must be the place she had come so far to seek. This was the den of the Witch o' Woods.

III

GATHERING courage, Rose-Marie at last ventured into the dark opening before her. The way led downward; it was slippery, and now and then drops of water fell upon her. At last she came into a small square chamber. In one corner was a stone fireplace, wherein a few logs smoldered. Wood was piled on each side. Dried herbs and bones hung from the rafters, and one or two rude shelves were crowded with utensils and strange objects whose names she did not know. A low, rough bedstead filled another corner, and one or two heavy benches were pushed against the walls. Rose-Marie was so busy in staring about her that

she did not notice a little person who sat on a low stool by the fire, until a malicious chuckle startled her, and looking closely, she could just make out in the dim light a little old lady in a dull brown garb, with high pointed cap pulled well down over a dark little face. Two very bright eyes peeped at her, and the witch's nose went down as her thin mouth turned up in a shrill laugh, that echoed through the cavern and was answered by a whimper from somewhere beneath her feet.

Rose-Marie's heart stood still. But she set her lips firmly and made a little courtesy and said, "Good evening, mother!"

The Witch o' Woods jumped up with a startled look on her face.

"Hoity-toity! Here is the first mortal that ever spoke to me. Come hither, girl, and let me see the only being in the Harzburg who does not fear the Witch o' Woods."

As she stood there leaning on her tall cane, Rose-Marie thought she looked like a figure carved out of brown wood, and so she did, all but her eyes, which were piercing, though they did not look unkind now.

"But I *am* afraid, ma'am," said Rose-Marie.

"But I had to come for my brother Eldwald; and O madam, if you have changed little Eldwald into a rabbit, I beg that you will release him, for my mother weeps all day, and my father cannot work for sighing. I will serve you faithfully and well if you will only let him go."

"What is your name?" said the witch, though she knew it already, being a witch.

"I am Rose-Marie, the daughter of Hans, the stone-cutter," answered the girl, with another courtesy.

"Go to the corner cupboard, Rose-Marie, and take down some supper on a platter you will find there, and then we shall see what we shall see."

In the cupboard was a nice plump cake, all iced, with a knife lying by, and it said, "Eat me!" On a shelf above stood a finely baked capon in a silver dish, and it cried, "Eat me!" And by its side stood a handsome bottle of wine, which gurgled, "Drink me!" And down on the lowest shelf of all stood a little brown loaf and an earthen cup of milk, which said nothing at all; these Rose-Marie took and placed on the platter as she had been told, and going to a bench near the fire, began to eat with good appetite.

"Hum," said the witch, "not greedy. Why did you not take the good things in the cupboard, stone-cutter's daughter?"

"Why, they did not seem suitable for me, ma'am, and I thought that, had you intended such grand provisions for my eating, you would have mentioned it."

"Had you eaten them, you would now be a hare with the others," growled the witch, very much disappointed.

When Rose-Marie had eaten and set away the platter and cup, the witch showed her a pallet where she might sleep. And after a little prayer, the tired girl lay down and slept as peacefully as if she had been in her own little bed.

The Witch o' Woods sat mumbling by the fire all night long, trying to change Rose-Marie into a rabbit; but try as she could, all her magic failed. For when we send up a thought of thankfulness and ask help of the Love that is ever near, a beam of light comes down like a lovely angel and guards us from all harm. So at dawn the Witch o' Woods sat cold and cross by her dead fire, and wondered to find a power greater than her own.

Then she roused Rose-Marie, who hustled

about busily, and soon had the chamber bright with a crackling fire, clean as a good sweeping could make it, and a hot breakfast smoking before the old witch, who for the first time in years found herself comfortable.

When they had eaten, she took up her staff and a great sack of grain, which she spilled over the whole room until it fell into every crack and crevice.

"Now," said she, "I shall try you. If you serve me well three days and do the tasks I set you, you shall go free with little Eldwald; but if you fail, he will remain a little hare and you shall be my slave forever, and never again see the sun. By the time I return to-night, this spilled grain must be back in its sack, and, mind you, not one kernel must be lost!"

And with that she went out, and slammed the heavy door behind her, bolting it fast.

Rose-Marie's heart sank; but she glanced at the rush-broom in the corner, and crying, "At least I can try," set to work. But though she persevered until noontime, only a small part of the grain had been gathered.

Resolved, however, not to despair, she sat down to eat the bread and cheese the witch

had left out for her, when she heard the whimpering that had frightened her the night before, and seeking for the sound, she opened a trap-door in the floor, to find there a cage filled with all kinds of rabbits. These were the poor little children the Witch o' Woods had caught, and there was a snow-white one that reached his little paws through the cage and cried more piteously than the rest, with tears in his little round eyes. And this, she knew, must be little Eldwald.

Breaking up her food, she divided it among them, and watered them in a bowl from a huge piggin of water that stood behind the door. Then she swept and cleaned their cage as well as she could through the bars, put straw in it from her pallet, and after caressing and reassuring little Eldwald, she shut them up again for fear the witch would come.

Then she went back to her task, but began to despair as the afternoon wore away and she had made so little progress. At last she sat down by the hearth to weep, and her tears fell into the cold ashes; when far above her head she heard a soft "Cooee-cooee," and found by stepping inside, she could look up the chimney,

on the rim of which sat six pretty wood-doves, cooing and preening their feathers.

"Cooee, Rose-Marie," they called; for the fairies had told her story, and all the little woodland creatures were ready to help her. "Why do you weep?"

Then Rose-Marie explained her plight, and down flew the six wood-doves. In a jiffy their sharp beaks "pecked, pecked," here and there, their keen eyes spying out every grain, and by the time the sun went down, they had filled the sack and left not one kernel outside. Then, with a soft "Cooee," they disappeared up the chimney, and Rose-Marie, much relieved, set about getting supper, which the witch found smoking hot when she came in at dark.

She gasped when she saw the great sack of grain standing in a corner, but, poke and pry as she might, she could not discover one kernel left out. So she was forced to sit down to her nice supper, and, looking at her as they sat eating, Rose-Marie thought she was not so brown nor so wrinkled as she had been.

At bedtime, after her usual prayer was said, Rose-Marie lay down on her hard bed and was soon fast asleep, leaving the witch staring into

the fire, and there she sat all night, as before; and, as before, her magic failed. In the morning she awoke Rose-Marie, and when they had breakfasted, she emptied a great jar of peas into the ashes, and repeating her commands, she hobbled away. And Rose-Marie thought she was taller and straighter than she had been.

Rose-Marie picked up peas and put them into the jar, but gained little headway; and at noon she fed and tended the little captives under the floor.

And when, some hours later, she gave up in despair, declaring that the peas seemed to grow more rather than less, she heard a "scratch — scratching" at the door, then a "gnawing — gnawing," and finally, through a tiny hole they had gnawed at the door's bottom, came a mole, a squirrel, and a chipmunk; and, bowing low before the weeping girl, they cried:

"We will help you, Rose-Marie!"

My, how sharp claws and teeth did fly! How furry coats did flash to and fro over the floor, here and there and everywhere, until every pea was safe in the jar, and they whisked out of the hole in the door just as the witch's steps sounded in the passage outside.

She came in to find Rose-Marie dishing up supper by the bright fireside, and had to confess that every pea was in the jar and the supper the best she had ever eaten, for Rose-Marie had baked little cakes in the warm ashes, and set out a pot of honey and one of fresh butter which she had found in the cupboard.

And that night it was the same as before: after her prayers were said, little Rose-Marie slept safely and well, and the magic of the Witch o' Woods failed.

Therefore, on the third morning she awoke the girl with a rough shake, and when ready to go away, she took two great pails of water and emptied them over the stone floor of the cavern, where the water stood high enough to run over Rose-Marie's wooden shoes. And bidding the girl see to it that the pails were full when she returned, the Witch o' Woods went out, chuckling with glee, for well she knew that no power on earth could gather spilled water.

When she was gone, poor Rose-Marie climbed on a bench to be out of the wet, and cried and cried and cried, and all the little captives under the floor cried with her.

It was nearly noon, when down the chimney

flew a sleek, pretty swallow, with so merry a chirp that Rose-Marie smiled before her tears were dried.

When he had heard her troubles, he sat for a moment on the mantel-shelf with bowed head, for this, indeed, seemed a task too hard for any bird or beast. At last he broke into an excited trill.

"I know," he chirped. "Far, far away to the north, over the icy plains of Norway into the ever-frozen fastness of the Arctic night, dwells the north wind. He alone can help us. If I can find my friend the gull, and he can carry the news, and north wind will come, you are saved. Cheep — cheep." And off he flew, like a rocket.

But Rose-Marie was not a whit comforted by his words, for there were so many "ifs" in the way. And who knew, if the gull found north wind, whether or not he would leave his beloved ice-floes, where he herds his giant flocks of white polar bears, as farmers herd sheep, or drives the seals far out to sea, as he blows great gusts over the bergs upon the poor ships that flounder at their base.

Who could believe that so great a king would

come far south to aid a poor little peasant maid? And Rose-Marie's tears began to flow afresh, when a little song which her mother had taught her seemed to ring in her ears:

"If God is All-in-all,
His children cannot fear."

Over and over she hummed the comforting words all the long afternoon, while the little rabbits whimpered for food, as she could not open their pen for the water.

But the world is full of charity for them that follow Love's way. And the swallow found the gull, the gull found the north wind, and when he heard the story of Rose-Marie and the Witch o' Woods, he laughed long and loud, until great icebergs splintered about him; and, wrapping his glittering white mantle about him, he flew southward, cooling the air as he went, until, for forty years afterward, all Germany talked of the "cold summer."

Down, down he flew, until it was nearly sunset when the forest on the Harzberg came in sight. Down, down to the top of the chimney of the witch's den, and with one kind "Halloo" to Rose-Marie, he blew an icy blast down the

chimney, which froze the water on the witch's floor, and, cracking it with her broom handle, Rose-Marie soon had it all in the pails again, and by the time the Witch o' Woods came, the nice, hot fire had melted the ice until the great pails stood brimming with water and the floor was dry and clean.

And then there was a great ado! The Witch o' Woods shrieked and raged. She shook her enchanted staff at Rose-Marie, and in vain tried to utter words of magic. Failing to do this, she turned, in turn, into a bear, a wolf, and a great black eagle. But Rose-Marie stood firm by the fireplace, and, having now learned that evil had no real power, she did not feel afraid.

Finally, after some moments of such goings-on, the Witch o' Woods began slowly to change back into her own shape. And yet it was not she who at last stood there, slender and straight, with shining golden hair falling from a green, leafy crown, but a beautiful fairy, who smiled at Rose-Marie as if she enjoyed her surprise.

For love and goodness can change even ugly witches into fairies, and that is what they had done. And the Witch o' Woods was gone forever, and in her place was a lovely fairy of the

woods, who loved and cherished every woodland creature ever afterward.

Then the fairy, still smiling kindly, opened the door of the little cage under the floor, and out trooped a lot of little children, among them little Eldwald, whom you may be sure was clasped in Rose-Marie's arms.

Then said the wood fairy:

"Come, let us leave this dark place and go out into the greenwood and sunshine. But before I go, you shall all be recompensed." And, going to the side of the cavern, she drew forth the great treasure of the Witch o' Woods — gold and jewels, diamonds, pearls, and rubies — and divided it among them.

But to Rose-Marie she gave the most beautiful of all — a great pink-hearted pearl, set round with blazing diamonds. "This," said the wood fairy, "is small pay for the service you have done me; but you have love, the pearl of great price, in your heart, dear, and that no money can buy, and nothing can take it away. But this jewel shall some day crown the diadem of a princess, and Rose-Marie, the stone-cutter's daughter, shall wear it."

Which proved all too true; for years after-

ward, when Rose was grown up, a handsome prince came riding over the Harzberg — But that is another story, for another time.

And the wood fairy, with Rose-Marie and the other children, danced out of the black cavern into the bright sunshine. And how the birds sang above them in the green boughs! And how the perfume of the flowers came from the thickets! And the way opened broad and smooth before them as, with filled hands and joyous hearts, Rose-Marie and the other children went home.

# V

## TOODLES AND THE GRAY LADY

IF Toodles had not been cross that morning at breakfast, because she could not have nine buckwheats, she might have gone to the pantomime with mamma and Uncle Charles, and all that I am going to tell you would not have happened. But Toodles — her real name was Mary, but Uncle Charles called her Toodles, because that was the first word she had ever spoken — got out of her bed "wrong side" (that's what nurse said). She fretted because it was raining, cried when her hair was combed, and was so naughty at the breakfast table that she was sent up to the nursery in disgrace, and went to her dolls' house with her lips stuck out and a very deep frown on her pretty little face.

Dear me, how the poor dolls suffered that morning! Geraldine, the big bisque dolly, was put to bed, after a severe spanking, just because

she would shut her eyes when Toodles wanted her to lie on the couch and pretend to read from the little Testament, with which Toodles was not allowed to play. Then Cadet, the woolly doll with bead eyes, fell into the cistern when his mother took him out in the back entry for water. There was plenty in the nursery, but it was fun to turn the cistern crank and see the water run into the pitcher. But after Cadet was drowned, Toodles felt so sad that she shut up the doll house and went to look for the cat.

It was Saturday. Mamma and nurse were busy, so the little girl was left alone in the dining-room, where the cat lay asleep, her gray paws stretched out before her, and her gray head upon them. Monnie-cat was dreaming of mice, for she groaned, snorted, and twitched her claws. But Toodles did not care anything about that; she picked up the kitty and sat herself in the deep window-seat. Monnie yawned reproachfully, and struggled to free herself. Then, I regret to say, Toodles slapped her and called her a hateful old thing, bursting into tears, all out of pure bad temper. Just then cook began to set the table for luncheon, and asked Toodles to run up-stairs for the key to the linen closet.

Toodles was usually very obliging, but to-day she said she wouldn't, and was so cross that cook called her a "sassy little missy," which made the tears fall faster than ever.

By the time luncheon was served, mamma came in with Uncle Charles, who tried to get his niece into a better humor. But she sulked until he took out three pink tickets and said to mamma, "By the way, Emily, here are tickets to 'Humpty-Dumpty.'" Oh, then how Toodles clapped her hands! But mamma looked grave and shook her head. "No, we cannot go, Charles, Mary has been too naughty to-day to go anywhere; you can take grandma and Josie."

Toodles cried and cried, "quarts," she afterward told me; but mamma was firm. So Uncle Charles went after grandma and Josie, and mamma talked to the child for a long time, telling her how she wished to see "Humpty-Dumpty" herself, but would not, because she could not let her naughty little daughter go. Then Toodles was sorry, and promised to be good, and mamma, after giving her two chocolate wafers, and Hans Andersen's tales to read, went back to the sewing, leaving her alone with Monnie, who had eaten her luncheon, too, and

now purred forgivingly as she rubbed against Toodles' feet.

Toodles gave her half of a wafer because she had slapped her — and that was real repentance, for the wafers were delicious — then took her up in the window-seat, where she sat blinking her green eyes at the rain, while Toodles read "The Elfin Hill" aloud.

When it was finished, she said to Monnie, "Now, dear, don't you wish it was all really true, and we could see the elf girls dance in the moonlight?" But Monnie only switched her tail, sitting up so demurely that Toodles cried, "Why, kitty, you look just like a little gray lady!"

Then a funny thing happened: Monnie's fur grew long, her paws changed into hands and feet, and she stood up, a little lady with long gray hair nearly covering her gray dress.

Toodles' eyes grew round with astonishment as the gray lady spoke in such a soft little voice: "O dear me, O dear me! So much to be done before they come," and then turned to hurry away down a passage which seemed to open right in the wall. Toodles started up, for the gray lady was hollow, like a mask, and she re-

membered that the lizards running up and down the elfin hill had said that the elf girls were hollow, so had always to keep front face. "My! Then this must be the old elf girl herself!" and Toodles ran after her as fast as she could. The passage was long and dimly lighted, with doors on either side, which had names printed on them in large gilt letters.

Toodles paused long enough to read some of them, and skipped delightedly when on one she saw "Little Claus," on another "The Robber Girl;" and on one whence came a cold draught was the name, "The Ice Queen." From this door she ran away at once, I can tell you! and if you have ever read Hans Andersen, you will know why.

By this time, the gray lady had turned the corner and gone out of the passage. As the door closed behind them, Toodles found herself on a great heath. It was night, and the wind swept across the dark waste, above which the stars glowed like golden lamps in the far-off sky. On they went, until suddenly they came upon a hillock, which seemed to spring up right at their feet. On this Toodles stumbled and fell, frightening a large lizard who sat there.

By the time the little girl had seated herself on the top of the hillock, the gray lady had vanished. So Toodles sat there saying to herself, "And so it is true, after all, and soon the old Norwegian and his sons will come, and the elf king's daughters will dance."

"Of course, child," said a petulant voice close to her ear, as the old gray lizard rose on her tail to catch a better glimpse of her in the dim starlight. " Of course, as soon as the moon rises, the elf hill will open, and then I fancy we shall see what good society is. I myself am unable to go about much, on account of my large family; but I assure you I am well connected, being closely related to the dragon and the rockshaft."

For some moments the lizard droned on, using such large words that Toodles could not understand half she was saying and began to get tired and cross, when the moon rose suddenly, big and round, over the elfin hill, looking so near that the little girl was half afraid, though he smiled on her very kindly.

Then there were sounds of music. The elfin hill opened and seven lovely little maidens came out, with scarfs of woven moonshine and gowns

of pearly mist. The gray lady (or the old elf girl, as we must now call her) followed, her long hair fastened up under a glittering crown. And she leaned upon the arm of a great rosy old man, whom Toodles recognized, by his bear-skin cap and sealskin coat, as the old Norwegian himself. The three sons lay asleep back of the elfin hill, for the elf king had turned them out when they had drunk too much wine and shouted and trod upon the ladies' toes in dancing.

Now the elf king joined the group, his high crown shining in the moonlight like a hundred glowworms. The music inside became louder and louder as the musicians marched out on the green-sward. Twelve very large black crickets were the fiddlers, twelve very green grasshoppers played the bass viol, and six very fat brown locusts beat the drums they carried under their wings.

So gay was the music and so bright the moon-shine that Toodles and the lizard joined hands and danced around the glittering, whirling circle of the elfin folk, where the old Norwegian whirled the elf girl until her long gray hair fell down. Round and round they circled, faster and faster, until they were but a whirl of color and light. Louder and louder shrilled the music. The

big moon sailed up into the deeper blue of the sky, as if he, too, marched to the music, and as if the stars must hop out of his way or be run over. Faster and faster, until Toodles grew so excited that she sat right down, and fell over the elfin hill into their very midst. A shrill chorus of tiny cries went up, the dark heath seemed to melt from under the child; the whirling figures vanished; the moon and stars faded out into the cheerful firelight of the dining-room; and Toodles found herself on the window-seat, rubbing her eyes, with Uncle Charles holding out to her a picture of a funny clown, and mamma smilingly saying, "Why, you and Monnie have both been asleep in the window-seat!"

But this is just what Toodles ever afterward denied.

## VI

### LITTLE HANS AND THE KOBOLDS

ALONG time ago, near a village of the Oberharz, was a little house of rough stone, with gay wallflowers growing in the mossy patches on its thatched roof. Its windows were small and crooked, and a bake-oven bulged the wall on one side of its low vine-studded door.

In the clean swept yard, marigolds marched in two yellow ranks up the broken flagged walk, and a tall linden drooped over the attic window of its high pitched roof, where little Hans and his sister Gerta slept.

Behind the house was the forest, and then the mountain crags, all very quiet, with only a goat's bell tinkling now and then, or the twit of a swallow. And up beyond the house and forest and crags was the great mountain, the Vorharz.

On the mountain, the streams ran bright and clear over bolder and smooth, pebbly bottom,

lingering in cool ferny places where the quaking aspen bent and sweet red raspberries grew.

On the mountain, the rough crags and peaks loomed barely about the shadowy canons and valleys, on up to where the everlasting snows gleam coldly under the starlight, or glow, roseate, in the light of the dawning.

Little Hans was bold and wayward, and if it had not been for Gerta, he would have given their parents no end of care. But she, being a year older, looked after him, and at nightfall she often had to go in search of him, for he was always running here and there, in forest and village, even venturing up on the crags, which were brown rocks, bare, save for a bit of juniper or a stunted fir-tree jutting from the side of the mountain, with dark caves where the most daring goatherd or bravest hunter feared to go.

These they called the berg caves. And when the oldest grandmother in the village sat before her fire late one afternoon with a little crowd of children about her, little Hans stood by her chair to hear her tales of the kobolds, who haunted the berg caves. Woe betide him who slept beside one of them, for he would vanish, and the world would know him no more, for he toiled

deep inside the mountain, a slave to the Kobold king, until some one was brave enough to venture by night within the caves and, reaching the king's throne, demand the prisoner's release. But never, said the grandmother, never in all the years, had one been found willing to go; and never had one who vanished thus returned.

It became twilight as she talked, and little Hans' mother was bustling about in their home setting forth the supper. So Gerta must run to the oldest grandmother's house and bring home little Hans.

At supper, he was full of the kobolds; but his father declared it was no good luck to talk of the little folk. "But father, last night, when all were abed, I heard you and mother speak of how poor we are and how you dreaded the long winter coming. In the mountains, father, are all kinds of gold and precious stones, Grossmutter says." But his father stopped his chatter, and, supper over, they were soon all abed.

But long after all was quiet and the cricket was chirping by the smoldering hearth, Gerta heard little Hans mutter in his sleep. "Silver and gold and all manner of precious stones;"

and when she awoke in the morning, the attic window stood open and little Hans was gone.

He had climbed from the roof into the linden-tree and gone off in the moonlight to hunt the gold of the kobold king.

Goatherds and chamois hunters for miles around aided in the search for him, as well as the village neighbors; but after a week of seeking, the lost boy could not be found, and he was mourned as dead. But not by little Gerta. She was very sure, in her heart, that he was far within the berg caves, a slave to the kobolds; but as no one believed her, she finally came to say no more about it. Yet every day, as she followed their goats as they minced daintily along to join the village herd, she fell into a way of asking every swift-winged swallow, every darting fish, every golden butterfly, "Where is little Hans?"

One evening, at sunset, when all the peaks were rose, and all the valleys purple patches on the dusky mountainsides, and the goatherds' horns blew sweet and high as they gathered their flocks, — just then, as she stood by the dripping basin of the spring in her garden, she saw a toad slip out from beneath and sit with half

shut jeweled eyes, darting his slender tongue to catch the midges dancing in the last sunbeams.

Again little Gerta asked, as she had so often, "Oh, where is little Hans?" And a tiny, lisping voice answered, "Serving the kobolds under Oberharz."

The toad then hopped away, and Gerta, hardly believing her ears, could not be sure that it was he who had spoken; yet as he went through a broken place in the wall, he turned his head and blinked at her knowingly. But when she told her father and mother, they thought she had dreamed it.

All that night little Gerta could not sleep. The tree-frogs chirped "Little Hans," the sleeping swallows, twittering under the eaves in their dreaming, seemed to sound his name. A nightingale came and sat in the linden-tree, and the moon peered palely in from behind the dark little bird with the silvery voice singing of lost love and longing. "She means little Hans," thought Gerta, and two big tears slipped down her cheeks.

At that hour when the world wakes and turns over in its bed to sleep again until sunrise, when

the cocks were crowing the shrill high call of the false dawn, she could endure it no longer. Running to the window, she looked out into the dark, starry sky. The air was chill, and she shivered as she began to dress. Taking her little red, hooded cloak, she climbed over the window-sill and out into the linden-tree.

"O mother-linden, do not let me fall!" she whispered, and the rustling new leaves seemed to answer, "Climb down and do not fear."

Soon Gerta was on the ground, soon across the yard and garden, and into the forest. Strange to say, the trees that seemed so dark from her window seemed now but great lacy fans, through which the stars sparkled like spangles; and a smooth, mossy path lay under her feet, as she hurried on, eager to reach the berg caves.

The trees were now farther apart, and as Gerta went higher, the bare rock began to show, with only a bit of juniper or a stunted fir here and there.

Then the crags overhung her, and in the starlight the little sister climbed and climbed, cold and dizzy. But she kept on until, as she pulled herself up over a ledge, she stumbled over some-

thing soft and furry, and sat down with a gasp as a small, squeaky voice said crossly, "Look where you are going, child; you nearly spoiled my fine velvet cloak." Two bright eyes gleamed at her, and sharp little teeth snapped at her hand.

"Ah, Herr Mole," cried Gerta, never heeding his bad temper, "tell me, have you seen little Hans? Is he in the kobolds' cave?"

Herr Mole was not really cross, and he liked Gerta's respectful address. On her finger shone a thin silver ring.

"Well, now," answered he, "I have seen him lately, and if you will give me that shining band on your finger for a bracelet, I'll tell you."

After slipping it on his front paw, Herr Mole continued:

"Little Hans came this way when the moon was first quarter, and went straight into a band of kobolds making their usual rounds."

Gerta looked about anxiously. "Do not be afraid; it is too near morning for them now. They carried him inside the berg, and if you will go to the entrance up above us there, my friend, the great white owl, will no doubt help you find him."

So saying, Herr Mole hurried away, turning his paw this way and that to get a good look at his new bracelet.

At the mouth of the cave, Gerta was stopped by a stern "Who — Who are you?" And there were two fiery balls of light above her head in the center of the dark arch. But it was only the great white owl, who came down at her call and was very polite when he heard she had been sent by his crony, Herr Mole. "Oh, yes," he had seen little Hans go by with the kobolds; but Gerta must give him that shining clasp at her throat before he would tell her how to follow. Gerta slipped off the little brass cloak clasp and hung it around his neck on her hair-ribbon.

The great white owl then led her inside the cave and showed her a point of light far down in its black depths.

"That is the light of the kobolds' fire, and all day and half the night must little Hans delve coals to keep it bright, for if it should die, the kobolds would all fall asleep and not wake again for a thousand years. Do not be afraid of the dark, little Gerta, for to eyes that really see there is no darkness."

Then Gerta noticed that, though all was black as night, she could see quite well indeed, and she left the great white owl sitting like a big ball of down, his eyes rolling like yellow moons as he craned his great round head to admire his necklace.

Walking resolutely on over the slippery, mossy stones, Gerta was finally stopped by a whirr and a shrill "Cheet — cheet," like the twit of a swallow and a mouse's squeak combined. Something big and dark fanned her cheek, and down flew a big black bat, menacing her with sharp teeth and extended claws.

"Good evening, Frau Bat," cried Gerta in a trembling tone, for the bat looked very big and fierce. "Have you seen little Hans? The great white owl sent me this way in search of him!"

Frau Bat drew back, mollified by this respectful address. "Indeed, child, I have seen little Hans. I know you both from having flitted past your attic window many an evening as you went to bed. But before I tell you news of him, you must give me that pretty red cloak to line my nest."

So Gerta gladly laid the cloak at Frau Bat's

feet, who directed her how to slip unseen into the kobold hall, and gave her this counsel:

"Do not speak, laugh, or eat while you are in the hall! Put this bit of my fur into your shoe, and you will be invisible to all but little Hans. And if you can find a way to quench the kobold fires, they will all fall asleep for a thousand years, and little Hans will be free."

Thanking her kindly, Gerta passed on, and finally came into a large hall, where glittering pendants hung from the high rocky ceiling; and all around the room sat queer little brown men, with long beards and pointed caps, wherein a tiny lamp glared. Taller and stouter and with a far longer beard of snowy white, sat the kobold king on a golden throne, with a crown of gold on his head; and his light burned brighter than all the rest.

Before each kobold was a little table laid with a fair white cloth, whereon were rich foods in golden dishes and silver goblets of sparkling wine. In the center of the hall was a sort of iron brazier of giant size, and in it flamed a great fire. From time to time a stooped black figure toiled up from a pit behind the king's throne with a sack of coal on its back, and when it came

shrinking into the light, jeered and taunted by the kobolds, poor Gerta thought her heart would break, for the poor slave who fed the fire was little Hans dressed in sooty rags and his fair face and yellow locks black as ink. He rarely lifted his head, but as he turned for more fuel, a kobold, rougher than the rest, pushed him against the brazier, and they laughed at his scream of pain as the burning sleeve scorched his arm. Gerta, forgetful of everything, ran behind the little man, and, catching him by his beard, pounded him over the head with his heavy silver cup.

Then they all jumped from their seats, rushing about to find what had hurt their comrade; but, Gerta, invisible, had slipped through the crowd, beckoned little Hans to follow her, and run down into the coal pit, where she stifled her brother's cries of joy in her apron.

As it was nearly dawn, the time when the kobolds sleep for an hour, they were left alone, for each kobold fell asleep right where he sat or stood as the sun began to rise, and the sister and brother plotted and planned, though she could speak only by signs, until Hans was again driven to his task, and they began the day's work

of digging the precious ore inside the mountains, and melting it into ingots of gold and silver.

How hungry poor Gerta grew as the day went on! Fortunately, she had in her pocket a bit of bread and cheese left from last night's supper; but as night came on again and the fairy tables came up out of the floor at a nod from the kobold king, it was all she could do not to snatch a bit of the rich food they threw about, those more kind even tossing bits to their little slave.

Hungry, and fearing discovery, in spite of the bat fur in her shoe, Gerta sat all the evening behind the kobold king's throne, plotting and planning some way to put out the fire, as she could not take Hans away with her, for he was not invisible, and a kobold lamp glowed in the cap fitted on his head with a magic word, so that it would not come off, however hard they pulled.

"I must have help, or I'll never do it," she said to herself as the long, dark day dragged on. "I'll go to Frau Bat and see what she can say."

So back went little Gerta, climbing up the long, slippery way from the mine until she found Frau Bat asleep, hanging head downward in

a most alarming way. She was so vexed at being waked that she squeaked and showed all her sharp little teeth, and only said crossly, "I told you if the fires went out, they'd all fall asleep and never wake up." Nor would she say one word more, it mattered not how much Gerta begged.

Finally, in despair, she went farther up, to the cave's mouth. Over the door the white owl was perched, like Frau Bat, asleep. When she had wakened him by standing on tiptoe and tweeking his tail feathers, he said "Hoo—hoo" very loudly, and would have fallen asleep again, when she cried, "O sir, how can we put out the kobolds' fire?"

"Fire?" said he, sleepily. "Why water puts out fire. Any *dummkopf* knows that, girl!"

And to sleep he went, and though she even dared throw some small pebbles up at him, he never stirred or opened his eyes, until, in despair, she went outside, almost blinded by the lovely evening sunshine that flooded the crags with light and made every leaf and berry as bright as a jewel in a queen's diadem.

After some searching among the rocks, she found Herr Mole's house, where he, too, was

curled asleep in his fine, black velvet cloak, with her ring shining on his little black paw in fine style. He was sleepily stupid, and all he could answer to her questioning as to how she was to get water on to the kobolds' fire was, "On top of the mountain there's a spring. Go away, child; if I lose my regular sleep, my cloak loses its gloss."

In vain Gerta begged him to tell her how a spring on top of the mountain could help her put out the kobolds' fires far underground; all he would do was to yawn and keep murmuring, "I must get my sleep — I must get my sleep."

It was getting along toward evening, and Gerta could see the smoke from her home curling up, a faint blue streak against the rosy sky. She was hungry and discouraged; but she reasoned that if she went home, they would not let her return, nor, indeed, believe any of her queer adventures. So, not knowing what else to do, she climbed up on the bergside, pausing now and then to eat the berries which jeweled the bushes on every side. When she had climbed a long way, she heard a great screeching and flapping of wings over her head, and looking up, saw a great eagle flying about, uttering the most

piercing cries. Then she saw the trouble it was in. One of its young had fallen from the nest, and its legs had caught under a stone that its fall dislodged. And there it lay, almost at Gerta's feet, its bright little eyes glazing and its little beak only croaking feebly. Taking the stone in both hands, Gerta dropped it over the cliff. She then lifted the young bird in her apron, and, climbing up on a high ledge, laid it down, where the old birds soon ministered to it; and after a while, Gerta saw it rise and hop feebly about.

Then the eagle cried down to Gerta, in its high, harsh voice, "Thank you, child. If you need help, call for the eagles, and you shall find it near at hand by the time of a wing's fanning."

On climbed Gerta in the dying sunshine, determined at least to reach the spring on top of the mountain, as the creatures seemed to think it might aid her, though she had not the faintest gleam of an idea as to how it could do so.

Coming around a sharp corner where stood a small, stout pine-tree, she heard a faint, panting cry, and saw a little red squirrel lying limply against a limb, faint and bleeding, while a large

hawk pecked and pierced him with his sharp beak till all poor bunny's fuzzy sides were red.

Seizing a stone, Gerta threw it straight and true, and it landed on the hawk's back with such a bang that, hurt and frightened, he flew away, screaming in disappointment.

"You have saved my life, child," chattered the squirrel, "and should you need help, call on the squirrel, and he will come."

Thanking him, Gerta hurried on, and reached a large, dark spring almost on top of the mountain just as the sun went down, and sat down beside it, as the twilight fell, a lonely, tired little soul, almost at the end of her endurance. So she added a few more drops of water to the spring by weeping into it. But then the stars came out, so calm and bright that they seemed to cheer her as she thought how changeless they were. As she glanced back to earth, she saw a gleam from a nearby crevice, and, looking nearer, saw to her wonder that she could look right down into the kobolds' cave, where the kobolds were about to wake from their day's rest, and were even now shoving and pushing little Hans about.

"Water puts out fire," said little Gerta, and

clapped her hands at the idea. If she could but turn the waters of the spring down upon the kobolds' fire! If a channel were made to turn the spring into the cave all at once in one grand splash, out would go the fire, and little Hans would be free!

"Now it's time for the squirrels to help me," said Gerta, and she called, "Come, little fuzzy-tails, come and help little Gerta!"

Then from every side came a chattering, bright eyes flashed, plumy tails waved. Strong, tiny claws scratched, scratched, at the loose dirt and stones, and soon the waters of the great spring began to drip, to run, and then — splash! They went down the crevice in the ceiling of the kobolds' cave, soaking the great brazier with its flaming coals, flooding the cavern deeply all about; and each little brown kobold man sat or lay asleep, just where he was, and little Hans fled quickly up the steep, dark way to the cave's mouth, free at last!

But now, alas! in the starry darkness Gerta stood alone on the mountain, and the liberated spring had cut a deep chasm between her and the road by which she had come. The round moon rode up the eastern sky and peered kindly

at her. She could hear little Hans' shrill call of "Gerta, O Gerta!" but she could not go to him.

"Oh, now I must have wings to descend, indeed," cried little Gerta, and clapping her hands she called, "Help from the great eagles!" And, sure enough, black wings flashed between Gerta and the moon, and two great eagles caught her by her stout little homespun gown, and down, down they flew to the cave's mouth, where the sister and brother were soon clasped in each other's arms.

"Now home," said Gerta to little Hans. "And mother will certainly have to give us a hot supper."

## VII

### THE MOUSE MILLER

IN the olden times, the city of Perth was a dour city, even when the sun shone, for the houses were tall and narrow and sad colored, and little and crumbling, and the streets were narrow, too, and muddy. But when the winter's mist blows in from the north seas and December's sleets begin, then it is a very cold and dreary place, indeed.

So young David found it one winter's morning, when the night mail had galloped and creaked and snorted up to the door of the Boar's Head Inn. His father had just passed away in Dunfermline, leaving but a hut, an acre, and a cow; and his mother, having much ado to find food for herself and the cow, sent David, a gawk of a lad of sixteen, to Perth to a cousin, of whom, save for his name and trade and the memory of a fairing with him when she was as young as her son, she knew nothing. So young David, when

he got out of the coach, had no notion as to where he should go.

A servant stood at the door of the Boar's Head, holding it open for the travelers, and from the icy pavement David glimpsed a bright fire, a neatly sanded floor, and a counter with shining bottles and plates of smoking hot food set out on it. But, having only a few pence, he was afraid to go in, and was turning away with his bundle over his shoulder, when the man cried:

"In wi' ye, lad! and have a hot cup of tea and an oat-cake for a penny."

So David, thus encouraged, went inside and stole into the chimney-corner to sit on a great settle, where he was soon warm and cozy, with his earthen mug of steaming tea and a well buttered oat-cake to eat with it. As the servant gave him his breakfast, David asked if he knew of a tradesman by the name of Alexander Hutton; but the fellow shook his head, and David, after his breakfast was finished, sat gazing into the fire, wondering what to do next, when he heard an old man across the hearth from him, seated on a settle as tall as his own, laugh.

"Zander Hutton, a tradesman," he cried, and his funny, brown face wrinkled up like a

nutcracker under his sparse white hair. "Hey, lad, there beant many in Perth now who know Zander; but we were both tradesmen fifty years ago. By good thrift, I saved, and live in ease; but old Zander dwells up an alley beyond the cathedral. Ask for the ragpicker, and you'll find him."

Now was poor David more aghast than ever. That he had come to seek aid from a ragpicker promised badly; but he paid his penny at the bar and walked out into the cold, gray morning, turning toward the gold-crossed spires of the cathedral. "At least," he thought stoutly, "Zander Hutton may know of some way I can get my living, even if he does pick up rags for his own."

Up the long High Street, around the cathedral close, and then down a narrow, miry alley, with the odds and ends of the backs of houses sticking out into it, and all the odds and ends of Perth's poor folk sticking out of them, overflowing windows and doors, cursing, laughing, fighting, singing; and right in the midst of it all was a dingy, low, dirty shop, with a wooden stair outside, leading to a dingier, dirtier attic above, and this was the place David had come to seek.

Inside, the room was piled high with rags and bottles, with sacks of bones and heaps of rubbish of every description; and right in its midst sat a little, old, red-eyed man, on a broken stool, who could hardly be told from the other rubbish, so brown and dirty and ragged was he. And yet, when David spoke his name, he answered civilly enough and got off the stool to open the half-door, which he kept barred, he explained, to keep out the bad boys, who were the torment of his life. Even as David went inside, a gang of ragged street urchins yelled about the door: "Old rags — old tags! Old ragged, tagged Zander! Where's your gold, Old Tags? Bring out the bags of money you count so late at night in your attic."

Then followed shrieks and yells and catcalls, and David, who had been taught in his village to respect age, ran out angrily upon them, and soon dispersed them with his cudgel.

"Come in, stranger lad," old Zander chuckled, patting him on the back. "Now what can I do for so brave and fine a lad?"

"I am David, your cousin Allyce's son," said David, "and I've come to Perth to seek my fortune, as my mother is a widow and too

poor to help me. She told me you had a kind heart and would find me work."

"And so I will," said the old man. "In this very fine shop there is much to do, — bottles to sort, rags to pick, chains to weigh, and a long beat to walk up and down the alleys of the town, and my old legs grow lame and my back stiff under my pack. You shall have a penny a day, Allyce's David, lodge above the shop, and feed yourself save for a wee bit o' porridge of a morning. Come, I'll show you where to take your bundle." And he hobbled nimbly outside into the alley and up the broken wooden stair, with David following with a very wry face; for if you set out to make your fortune, you would never think to begin at ragpicking at a penny a day.

The attic was dark and cold and dirty, like the shop, and such of his stock as Zander could not put in the shop was piled here. There were a ragged mattress on the floor, a few battered pieces of furniture, and David was right glad to throw down his bundle and descend with his cousin to eat a scanty meal of porridge, which the old man scraped into a cracked bowl from a pot hanging above a very small fire in the back of the shop.

Then "To work — to work," the old man cried. And all day long, until the lights came out and the big cathedral bell tolled six, did his cousin Zander keep David hard at it. Then he gave him a penny and showed him a cart around the corner where a man sold a bit of bread and dripping and a cup of coffee for just that much. And tired and half fed, David went to his cold bed at the end of his first day in Perth.

All that long, cold winter David picked rags, sorted rags, collected rags; never quite warm, never quite well fed; and the chief of his discomfort lay in the mice that infested his attic. They nibbled his clothes by day and raced across the floor at night, even daring to frisk over his bed, until, in despair of getting rest and sleep, he fell to making little traps for them, and finally caught them all save one, the oldest and wisest, who was, indeed, the king of all the mice, though David, of course, did not know that. He did know, however, that he vainly saved bits of bacon and cheese from his scanty supper, and vainly baited this trap and that; the King of Mice frisked about the attic unafraid, until he became a pet instead of a pest, and ran out

to feed on the choice bits that David carried in his pockets.

Outside the attic window was the roof of a tenement, and here prowled a great black tom-cat, gaunt and hungry, like all the alley cats, preying upon sparrows and unwary pigeons, and often, on moonlit nights, peering malevolently through the window-panes upon David's mouse.

One night Zander came up for some of his plunder and opened the window, and David, entering a few moments later, saw Tom spring from the window with poor mousy in his teeth. Through the window went David after the cat, and though the roof was slippery and steep, he climbed intrepidly up to the very comb, and there had the luck to seize Sir Tom by his tail, and in the mew of pain he let out, the mouse fell from his jaws, scuttled down the tiles, and was soon safe up a drain-pipe, where all Tom's mewing or scratching failed to reach him.

That night Davy had a queer dream. He thought that he saw his mouse grown taller and walking on his hind legs with much dignity. Six milk-white lady mice held up his tail, and on his head was a very shiny gold crown.

Around him came mice of every size, kind, and color, and they all paid him homage and cried, "Hail to the king!"

"This human," said he to an old white-whiskered fellow at his side, whose collar and mace proclaimed him a chansellor, "has saved the king's life, and all my subjects must now serve him. He came far to seek his fortune and found only hard fare and uncongenial tasks. Yet cheerfully and well has he done them, and to-morrow he shall find his reward."

Then all grew dark, the mice disappeared, and old Zander was calling to David from the foot of the stair that it was dawn, and he must start early on his tour of the town. So, with pack on back and stick in hand, Davy started out, whistling, just as the town was waking, thinking of his strange dream and half believing that something would come of it.

Yet nothing new came his way that day, save that his rounds took him past the back door of a mercer's shop, where a pretty girl called out to him to come and take away the rubbish from their bin. He entered a small, low room, where sat five or six women, laughing and chatting and winding linen thread on little reels

for the shop. As he emptied the rubbish bin, the shopman called out to them to hurry, and the girl who had smiled on Davy answered somewhat pertly that if there was some faster way to wind thread, they would certainly get through sooner, as they made little enough as it was.

Later in the day, David passed the prison windows where the French prisoners were confined, and stopped with a small crowd that lingered there, intent on a very ingenious cage which one of them had made, with a wheel at one end turned by a treadmill, wherein a pretty squirrel ran round and round.

That night the wind blew so that the whole house shook, and the crazy windows rattled and the shutters banged, until sleep quite left Davy, and he lay thinking over his dream of last night and of his day's rounds. And all at once there popped into his head an idea. The thread women turned the reel over and over to wind their thread; if bobbins were strung on a post that turned, why could you not wind many at a time, and if one had a wheel like the French prisoner's, why would that not wind the thread better than the hand?

He fell asleep turning the idea over in his

mind, and dreamed of his mouse again. This time the mouse said, "To-morrow I send my subjects to aid you," and sure enough, in a forgotten trap set far back in a corner, Davy found three pretty, bright-eyed little mice, who did not seem at all afraid. And you may be sure that Davy was early back at the prison window, studying the wheel cage. And that night he started making one, and by the light of his tallow dip, secreted from Zander's scant store, in an evening or two he had as neat a cage for his mice as had the French prisoner for his squirrel, only across its end were four reels strung, and by much coaxing he got a penny from old Zander and bought a little thread. That night it was quickly and smoothly wound, and he sold it for two pennies the next day.

And this was the beginning. He fed his little winders well, and as more came into the trap, let each three go free. And always more came, and more, until there was quite a row of little cages, and Zander wondered to find his young ragpicker get fat and rosy, for his thread now kept him well fed.

Days went by. Spring came, and old Zander went out with the winter, leaving his shop and

rags to Allyce's boy, with a bag of coins, not gold, indeed, as the street boys had cried, but enough to clean out the shop, buy thread and materials for wheels, and start Davy up a thread manufactory. For he now began to make reels that were turned by hand, winding twenty bobbins at once, and his little mice were long ago set free.

In a year he had moved from Zander's alley and set up in a decent street, with his mother, come from Dunfermline, to keep his house.

And because he must needs tell his mother how he had set about making their fortune, and women's tongues must ever clack, and the good woman must needs tell every old gossip of the kirk, the folk of Perth began to call young David the "Mouse Miller." And though he became rich and famous, and married the pretty girl who smiled at him from the back door of the shop, until this day Allyce's David is known as the "Mouse Miller."

## VIII

### ALICY'S ADVENTURE

ONE summer morning Alicy got up with a frown on her face, and it didn't come off even at a very nice breakfast, so mamma suggested that she take a walk about the big back garden and see if she could find a smile to put on.

She walked down the gravel path and around the shubbery out of sight of the house, where there was nothing but grass and trees and some tall, gay dahlias. It was quite like being far away, and she often came here to play "lost child," a play where you built a house of branches and leaves and eat lunch from flat stones, pretending that you are a little girl lost in the jungles.

Looking up at the clear blue of the sky and walking amid the whispering greenness of the leaves, you would have thought that Alicy should have a lovely smile right there; but the dark old pout lay on her little face like a veil and

only lifted a little as she spied a nice pink box tied neatly with a silver cord, lying on a pile of rock. Alicy opened it eagerly and piff-puff, out popped three lovely little fairies all pink and blue and gold, and flit, flirt, off they flew singing like finches, happy to be free.

"O," cried the surprised little girl and "O! O! O!" growled a deep cross voice beside her.

"O you horrid girl, you have let out my flower fairies, and now there is no one to make me a crown for my wedding. I have a good mind to pinch you black and blue."

"O, O-wee." This time it was Alicy, for what she had thought was a pile of brown bolders was a little hard-faced rock woman with buttons made of shining pebbles and grass for hair. Poor Alicy jumped and rubbed a red spot on her knee where the rock woman had pinched her.

"Now," said the rock woman, "you will certainly have to go and hunt them for me. You take this pink pebble in your mouth and go among the grass people and maybe they can help you find my fairies again. Hurry on!" and she gave poor Alicy such a kick that she flew into a clump of blue-grass, and found herself grown so small that the grass all about

her looked like tall forest trees; for the pink pebble had made her as small as an ant.

"Now," said Alicy, "I have four things to hunt for instead of one. A smile, and three flower fairies. Poor Bo-peep, I know how she felt out hunting for those tiresome sheep; though a smile and three fairies haven't three tails to bring behind them. Ha! Ha!" And that thought made her laugh aloud; and right in the path Alicy found a little golden smile which she tried on and, looking in a dewdrop on a near-by leaf, she found that it fitted exactly and was immensely becoming.

Cheered up by her good fortune she went on and met a file of ant soldiers all in black, shiny uniforms marching out to bring in the ant cows, which are little green aphides that they pasture on the under side of oak leaves. Their captain was very polite, as are all grass people, and in answer to her questions about the possible whereabouts of the flower fairies he told her that if she would catch a young grasshopper and ride him she would reach the fairy dell where they had no doubt gone.

After they had all saluted and marched off down the road, Alicy sat down in the cool shade

and taking some grass plaited a little halter and started out to catch one of the grasshopper colts frisking about in the pasture; but a big fat caterpillar came up and very fiercely demanded, "What are you doing with my horses?"

"Why, I didn't know they belonged to anybody," faltered Alicy, "I just wanted one to ride to the fairy dell. I would have turned it loose there." My, how the caterpillar worked all of his legs, he was so mad!

"It's a good thing for you that you are not a boy," growled he. "I hope that you didn't really mean to steal a horse, but I tell you the Anti Horse Thief Association will get you if you are up to such tricks long. Now beat it!"

Frightened at his angry manner and the long name he called her with such an ugly word as thief in it, Alicy made up her mind that he meant by "beat it" that she must go away, and she took to her heels like a good one; until finally quite out of breath, she sat down and cried a little.

Then she heard a squeak, squeak under her and found that she was almost sitting upon a funny, green-eyed, field-mouse, who wagged her whiskers in a friendly way and said, "I am

Milly Mouse. Who are you? " After hearing Alicy's story, she rubbed her sleek head with her little claw awhile, thoughtfully, and then said, "I think I can help you a bit; look in the path before you, right there! Go in there;" and with a swish of her tail, she whisked out of sight into a hole in the ground. Alicy looked all around and finally saw a large orange-colored ball with a little window in one side, like the candy eggs you get Easter. It was too large to pick up so she knelt down and looked in through the glass. Inside she saw a lovely landscape. Around a tiny lake grew red and white roses, all bright with sunshine; a fairy prince in green and gold armor and glistening filmy wings parted the roses and came down to the lake. As she looked he blew a call on his golden trumpet and six white swans came sailing up to the bank where a pretty shell-like boat rocked gently. He fastened this to the swans with a silken ribbon, and then he looked straight through the little window at Alicy and cried, "All aboard to the fairy dell!"

Alicy saw that what she thought was a window was really a door, and she turned a knob, opened the door, and walking down to the lakeside was

in the boat before you could say Jack Robinson. And there she sat beside the fairy prince while the swans pulled the boat over the clear, lovely water as they swam gently way.

In thinking of it afterwards, Alicy couldn't remember a thing the fairy prince said, but no doubt it was because she was so taken up in gazing at the lovely, sheeny wings and the darling little gold crown on his head. The scent of the roses on its banks were wafted over the little lake by a cool breeze, and the wings and feet of the swans made a soft paddling in the water that soon made Alicy sleepy, and despite her determination to look at the fairy once more to see whether his wings were feathers or just little moving sparkles of light, her eyes closed tightly and when she opened them again, it was dark and she could see nothing save one big star looking down at her between the branches of a great oak-tree.

She smelled violets so strongly that it reminded her of the time, when she was very little, that she poured all of mamma's best perfume over her kitty. They still call that cat "Vi," although her name was really "Tegums." Turning over on the soft moist pillow under her cheek

she found that she was lying on a bed of white violets and that all about her in the trees and on the grass tiny lights were beginning to twinkle and a faint far-away chorus of tiny voices was singing, hardly louder than a cricket's chirp:

"See, oh, see,
On bush and tree,
What lamps are shining!
Ting, ting, ting!

"They are eyes,
Of fireflies,
To light our wedding,
Ting, ting, ting!"

The singing was all mixed up with a lovely little chime of silver bells and Alicy sat up in delight. Surely this must be the fairy dell she had been seeking. She was lying in a tiny valley and about her rose the violet covered banks. And now that she was fully awake, she could see hundreds of little fairy houses all lighted up, and many delicate creatures, no higher than your thumb, coming down among the violets, carrying gold and silver lanterns, which were really little cages with fireflies shut inside, giving out a clear green light.

High above all this, on a glittering throne,

sat a lovely being larger and more beautiful than even the fairies themselves, and this was the great Titania, their queen. Her eyes were soft and sweet like mother's eyes, and her smile so kind that Alicy was not afraid, but ran and knelt before her throne. Titania spoke in a soft voice, like waterfalls going over bolders, "And what does the earth-child ask of the fairies?"

Then Alicy told of her travels in search of the truant fays, and as she finished, Titania waved her hand and called, " Violet, Anemone, Fern," and three fairies, violet, pink, and green clad came floating up the valley to where the queen sat. "Now," said Titania, "you must give them each a gift for a wedding portion and they will return with you to make Dame Bolder's crown."

So Alicy took her little scissors from her pocket and cut off a golden curl. "Good," cried the queen, " that will make Violet a capital mattress." Alicy took out her little silver thimble next, and Fern, who was a knight with a long green plume in his hat cried, "Splendid! Now I will have a cuirass that no beetle can pierce." Alicy then took off her little gold ring with the turquoise buckle and Anemone was delighted to own so elegant a belt.

Then they all kissed Alicy and laughed and danced about her, the lovely queen smiling down on them with her starry eyes, and all of the little fairy houses sparkled in the light, and the fairy folk, with the firefly lanterns, came up and joined in the dance till Alicy became dizzy with the music and the whirl and flash of light in her eyes.

And then it was the flash of sunshine in her own garden and mother dear, instead of Titania, leaning over her laughing.

"Why, sweetheart, you found your smile in slumberland."

"No, mother, I found it in the fairy dell. Oh, where are the flower fairies to make Dame Bolder's wedding crown?" but mother only said, "You have been dreaming, dear, come in to luncheon;" but Alicy knew better, though it is of no use to talk to grown-ups, as you know. So she quietly followed her mother into the house; but mark this, — the next day she found her ring and thimble on the bolder pile, and growing there were two lovely flowers, anemone and violet and the green fronds of a feathery fern. So she knew that the fairies had made Madam Bolder's wedding crown as Titania had promised.

# IX

## JEHAN THE GOLDHAIRED*

### I

THERE was once a village lad whose name was Jehan, but because of the golden curls that covered his head they called him "Goldhair;" and because he chose to sit at home and read his grandame's parchment book of knightly glory and fairy gold, while the other lads tilled the fields or roamed the woods, they called him a milksop, and he was laughed at and sometimes roughly treated by his parents and elder brothers. But his aged grandame, who dwelt in a lonely tower on a heath, and who was called the "wise dame," would shake her staff at them and prophesy fame and fortune for her favorite.

It was in the high tide of summer and all the

* From William Morris' "Goldilocks," published by Thomas Crowell & Company.

villagers were in the upland fields cutting grain. Indeed, so large were the wheat-fields of Goldhair's countryside, that it was called "The Land of the Wheaten-shocks," and Goldhair was often named in derision, "My Lord of Wheaten-shock." Early one morning as the household ate the porridge and yellow cream which the serving wench poured in earthen bowls, Goldhair came into the rush-lighted kitchen, his grandsire's sword clanking along the flagged floor. For, though they tilled the soil, the forebears of his family had worn armor and fought under a crested banner.

Goldhair was a brave sight that morning with his coat of scarlet and his hosen of green; a pheasant's feather curled from his cap; a scrip hung over his shoulder, and he girded the good sword at his side.

"Whither away, son Jehan, when my wheat hangs heavy for the sickle?" thus his father.

"Whither away, son Jehan, when the water buckets await thee at the well, that the reapers may not be athirst?" cried his mother.

"Whither away?" said his little sisters, "and why do you wear your holiday dress, Jehan?"

"Whither away?" chorused his three great

brothers, their smocks upgirded for the reaping and their brown arms and legs bare.

"I go into the wide, wide world," answered Jehan, "to seek fame and fortune and to bring back the nut-brown fay for a wife."

Now I must tell you that in an ancient wood nearby there dwelt a fay, a lovely creature with long, brown hair that clothed her like a garment. She seemed to serve and love all the woodland beasts and birds, and they often heard her sing there at twilight. Many a lad spent hours trying to catch a glimpse of her, but heard only the flitting of a light body through the leaves and a laugh like a wood bird's call.

Within the depths of the wood, there stood a ruined castle. Though its drawbridge was gone and its moat a mere reed-grown swamp, the great iron gates stood closed and none had ever dared to scale its massive walls; for at night when the wind rocked the great old forest trees and the screech-owls cried weirdly, strange lights flickered in its iron-barred windows and strange wails echoed from its vine-covered walls. It was to this fearful place that Goldhair had full intent of going, though he dared not say so, for fear they would forcibly detain him. So,

amid the jeers of his brothers, the reproof of his father, and the tears of his mother and sisters, he set out to seek his fortune in the wide, wide world and to bring back the nut-brown fay.

II

As the sun rose, Goldhair stepped into the dim aisles of the forest and

> "The autumn drought, and the winter rain,
> The frost and the snow, and St. David's wind,
> All these that were time out of mind,
> All these a many times shall be
> Ere the Upland Town again he see."

He pressed on to where no birds' notes sounded, nor any noise of life broke the silence, save the soft rustle of some leaf, or the silver tinkle of a stream. Six nights Goldhair lay down under the moonless sky. Six days he walked alone in the wood and his scrip was empty of food and he was footsore and weary when he arose on the seventh morning.

Before him, the trees seemed to open into a softly lit glade and he caught a glimpse of a white beckoning hand, and hastening forward, fell over a great moss-hidden stone and was set upright again by a strong arm, while sweet

lips brushed his cheek and he saw before him the sparkling eyes and shining face of the nut-brown fay. She was clad in a brown kirtle, all rent and shredded like the falling bark of an old tree. Her snowy feet were bare and a rustic scrip hung at her side. Now she took from her scrip and gave him rosy apples and brown cakes and a shell with which she dipped him water from a rivulet nearby, and they sat them down together on the grass and began to dine as if they were old friends.

"O fair one with golden hair, and so bravely scarlet clad, what is the name of thee?" asked the fay, and he told her his name and his condition and of how he had set out in quest of fame and fortune.

"But now," said Jehan, shaking his gold hair so that it sparkled, even in the dark wood, "I want but one thing and that — that you love me as I do love thee."

"And so I will," said the brown fay heartily, "and fame and fortune will come to thee if thou art a faithful lover and fearless knight. But many trials must assail us and I have great fear for thee, for already, she who sits in the gray death hall knows you have come; and amid

the shadows of evil that obey her will, she is plotting our destruction. Long have I served, a thrall in her hall and bower, and now it will be no easy thing for you to win me and my fortune from her."

Later when they had come where they could look across the clearing the fay cried to Jehan, "Look forth, O my Goldhair, and see what thou seest," and Goldhair looked and said, "I see an exceedingly high and handsome castle of rough-hewn stone."

"Oh, that is my mistress' home, and I fear to look upon it. What comes down the stony stair, Goldhair?"

"Nothing."

"No great white bear?"

"Nay, him I would kill with my sword."

"No great winged serpent?"

"Nay, her I would chop with my sharp blade."

"No poison flood?"

"Nothing, sweet fay, but leafy shadows flecking the gray stone."

"No flash of flame?"

"Nay, I would call upon my patron saints and at their blessing it would die away."

"My heart fails me. O Jehan! In some such

guise must my dread mistress appear, for I know well she sees all things in this wood and will never let us fare forth free from it. Look again, beloved Jehan."

"Ah, now I see a most beautiful queen all alone, dressed in a coat of peacock feathers and shod in gold. How fair she is as she smiles upon me in the sunshine! She beckons me to come. Her hair is like silver lying to her feet."

"O look not so. O look not so on her! She has bewitched thee, Jehan, her hair is twisted serpents. Dost not see she is an ancient witch, one-eyed and horrible? She is only beautiful by enchantment," and the fay seized and held his scarlet coat; but Jehan laughed and thrust her from him.

"Thou little brown thrush whom I found in the woods, seek not to peck the robe of light from the queen of beauty."

The brown fay scarcely knew her lover now; his glance was only for the enchantress, and though the fay could see her dusky skin, skeleton limbs, and horrid, toothless grin, to poor Jehan she seemed a vision of beauty, and with a cry he broke from her hold and ran to fall at the feet of the witch, who threw her arms about

his neck and with a triumphant laugh led him into the castle and shut the great iron-bound door upon the poor fay.

All day she sadly wandered through the woods, and finally when night came she lay down under a bramble-bush and sobbed herself to sleep; but as she slept she felt a cool hand touch her brow, and looking up saw a tall being, like a shaft of green light. It was crowned with a garland of leaves and its face was kind and beautiful.

"Fear not, little forest fay," it said, "thou art a daughter of the trees, and we, the tree-folk, will help thee."

Now the witch had cast a spell upon Jehan until he saw the empty ruins as a stately castle all filled with costly furnishings and treasures of silver and gold. And her, he saw, as a beautiful queen, and the ugly messengers of evil who came at her bidding, he believed to be gallant lords and fair ladies. All day he sat beside the witch queen on her throne and heard the pretty stories she told him hour by hour. Entranced in a half slumber, he listened to mandolins beside the tinkling fountain of a court that was really a bare, unwatered spot, the home

of hideous spiders and spotted toads. All memory of the nut-brown fay seemed gone from him, yet ever and anon he thought he heard a sweet voice call, "Jehan, beware!" "Jehan, beware!" and wondered what it might mean.

III

Now came the day of his wedding to the witch, and banners of scarlet and gold flaunted to the breeze; rich carpets and tapestries lined floors and halls, but in reality, only cobwebs draped the crumbly walls. Jehan sat at breakfast beside the witch amid a great crowd of company. And the warlocks, demons, spirits, and wizards that flocked there like crowds of evil birds, he believed to be noble guests who, richly clad, bent to do him honor as the liege lord of their queen.

As they sat at breakfast and the witch raised the marriage cup to her lips, though it was midmorn, the darkness of midnight fell upon them and all the guests cried out and ran about wildly, for the tree-folk had helped the fay, as they promised, and bent about the castle shutting out the sun. Emboldened by the darkness, the evil creatures began to tear and fight with

each other, and all sought to destroy the witch who ruled them. But she held them back by her superior power and cried out that whoever had worked the enchantment should go free from the castle with what belonged to him and a rich reward if he would bring back the light.

Then spake a sweet voice, "I am she who will do this; but I will to sit by the bridegroom's side, between him and the bride, until ye rise up at night-time, and I will to carry as much treasure as my small basket will hold and that which belongs to me besides when I go forth. Yet ye shall swear a binding oath that I shall go free with all that belongs to me."

"What sure oath shall I make?" said the witch queen smiling wickedly, for she knew only one oath unbreakable; but the voice answered and named that oath!:

"Thou shalt swear by the one eye in thy head and the evil ghosts and spirits that throng these cursed halls."

Then a great wail went up in the dark, but the witch said loudly, " I swear, because I wish to look again upon the light of day and the gold hair of Jehan my love."

So there was peace; the light came again;

the queen was beautiful once more and the guests handsome and courteous. But Goldhair seemed to dream of the wood and the lovely fay who fed him there, and though the witch smiled and laid her hand upon his he sat looking across the hall when there came towards him a lovely maid in a gown of green leaves. Like moonlight on a summer's eve she passed along the hall. It was the nut-brown fay who carried a golden basket which she set down upon the table at his side. Then she sat herself between him and the queen, but the witch queen smiled and waved her hand and Jehan was like one in sleep, and though the maiden poured his wine and whispered into his ear he knew her not.

"O Goldhair, dost forget the mirk wood and the meal we ate together? Dost thou forget the nut-brown fay? Dost thou forget the land of wheaten shocks where thou wast to take me, as thy bride, to thy father's house?"

But the witch queen sat and smiled and opened a casket which stood before her to play with its great jewels which she took forth by handfuls. And as she tossed them to and fro in her fingers they glittered like rainbows in the sunshine. But the bridegroom saw and heard not.

Only through the enchantment he seemed to dream of a loved voice and that his mother and sisters beckoned from his home door.

Then the maiden opened her basket and took therefrom a pair of milk-white doves, and taking food from the table, fed them from her hand; but the hen bird fed her mate with her rosy bill, and as the maid crumbled the bread, Jehan gazed on her white hand and seemed to remember a time when he, like the tender dove, was also fed by that kindly hand; but the witch touched him on the brow and all memory faded.

Then the male bird fought his tender mate to get the food she was eating, and as he looked on this, memory came to Jehan and he cried, "Foul bird! as ungrateful as I, to the kind love that fed me!" Then the maiden kissed his cheek and he knew and loved her again and he saw the witch and her servants as they really were, and springing up he, with his sword, drove back the monsters that would have torn them to pieces.

The witch, with a hideous yell, came towards them with a flagon of liquid fire, bent on their destruction. Then Jehan caught up the fay in his arms and with the good two-edged sword

gave one stroke and the head of the witch went flying through the air, and she and all of the company vanished, leaving them alone in the hall. Emptying the jewel casket into her basket, the fay took Jehan by the hand and they went forth free, out of the castle, through the great gate, into the green wood.

IV

HAPPILY they walked on, but ere they had gone far the fay cried, "Now turn you, my love, Jehan!" and after them came a great white bear, his teeth agleam and paws outstretched. Again the good sword flashed in the sun and the bear lay dead on the greensward. Then on and on they fled.

"Turn ye, Jehan, my love," again cried the fay. And behold, a great green dragon with long scaly body lashed at them, and only after a mighty battle was he chopped into pieces.

Then they went across a wide plain. It was now evening, and so weary and footsore were they, that they fain would have rested, but ere the stars came out a red mist rolled along the ground towards them and the fay cried aloud in fear:

"Now we are lost indeed, for this is the poison flood."

On they sped toward a forest with the great red waves rolling after them. And where they passed, grasses lay sear and the flowers withered and died. Then cried the nut-brown fay, stretching out her hands towards the tall trees:

"O my woodland folk, save us." As she spoke they entered the wood and the venomous flood rolled to their feet; but the good tall trees sucked down the flood into their strong roots, and where the vapor rolled, a bright stream sprang up and Goldhair and the fay laved their hot faces in its silvery coolness.

Now did Jehan rejoice for, said he, "Won are all our fights," but the fay answered him:

"Nay, for the night cometh down and I fall into sleep and thou must carry me as I sleep, and whatever may betide, if you lay me down, you lay me in my grave."

So Jehan promised to obey her and took her in his arms. There she lay against his breast and slept. The moon came up, round and golden, and peered through the branches on Jehan walking with the sleeping fay in his arms, his naked sword in his hand. By and by, the moon

was darkened by great batlike creatures which fluttered about them and gnashed upon him with their sharp teeth; but Jehan waved his sword and called upon the names of St. Gabriel and St. Michael for deliverance, and they flew away shrieking.

Then there sounded a woeful cry. A woman ran towards them with a man following at her heels, a long dagger in his hand.

"Save me! Save me! brave Jehan," she cried, kneeling at his feet while tears ran down her pallid face, and the man dressed in a sheepskin coat came running quickly with his weapon gleaming in the moonlight.

Now was Jehan hard pressed, for to fight for her life he must lay down his sleeping love and he could not see the woman die. Yet, as he bent to lay the fay on the grass, under an oak, the leaves murmured in his ear, "Beware! Beware!" and making the sign of the cross with his drawn sword in the air Jehan heard a great wail and the two figures disappeared in a puff of smoke. And thus he was free from the enchantment. Then the sleeping fay awoke and slid from his arms to kiss him right roundly. And the sun came up as they climbed

the hill above the Land of the Wheaten-shocks, and he saw the smoke from his father's house. And as they went down the green valley to the town, his kinfolk came running forth to meet him and his bride. And thus entering his home, amid rejoicing, he drew the fay after him, and forgetting all of their trials Jehan the Goldhaired and the nut-brown fay dwelt happy ever afterward.

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